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THE NEW REPUBLIC

SINS OF THE SANDINISTAS

A report from Nicaragua by Robert S. Leiken

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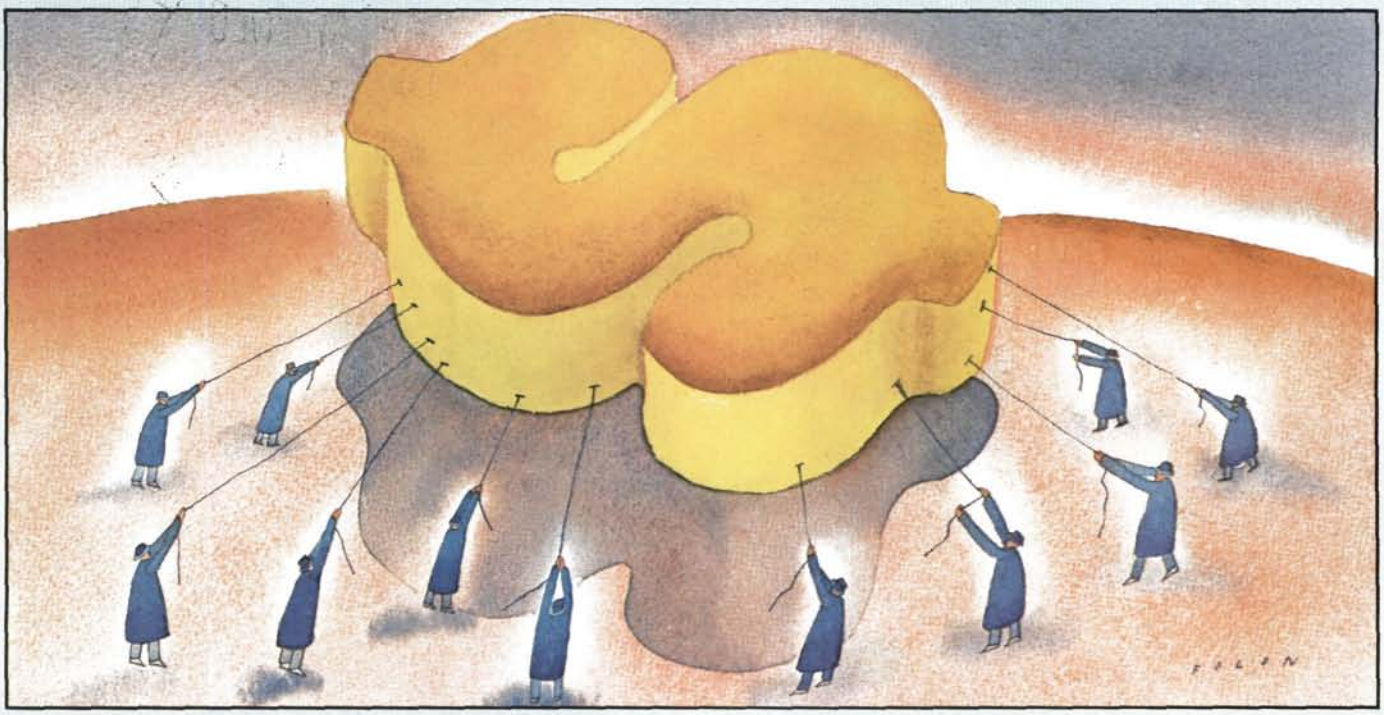

TOMORROW'S ELECTRICITY

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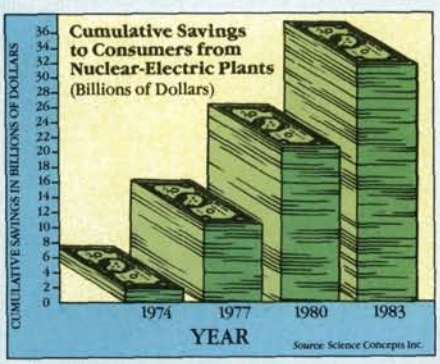
Nuclear power is cheaper energy for tomorrow

After a while, a nuclear plant's lower fuel cost more than makes up for its higher cost of construction.



This graph shows how much money has been saved over the past 10 years by using nuclear power. If the nuclear-generated electricity had come instead from coal-fired and oil-fired power plants (75% coal and 25% oil), then America's electric bill would have been more than $30 billion higher. And the nuclear plants now operating will continue to save $4 to $6 billion annually.

Critics of nuclear power point to the relatively high price of electricity from a new plant's early years of operation, as the cost of construction is being paid for. But they ignore the cumulative savings a typical nuclear plant provides to ratepayers over its full operating life. Nor do they mention the proven savings of the plants already on line.

"On the basis of sheer economics, nuclear power can still be a bargain for virtually every region in the country," says Peter Navarro, energy researcher, Harvard University, and author of *The Policy Game*.

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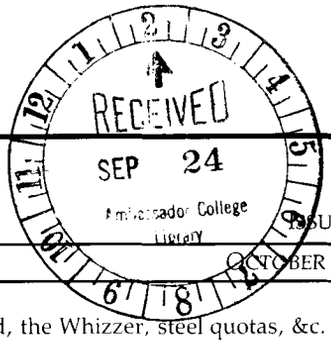

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ON THE LAMM

To the editors:

Governor Richard Lamm's "Long Time Dying" (TNR, August 27) is an oversimplification of a complex issue. In my experience it is a rarity when the life of someone with a hopeless prognosis is maintained artificially. The difficulty is deciding when the prognosis is hopeless. Governor Lamm seems to feel that physicians can predict with certainty who will survive and who will not. He is wrong. A case in point: a little over a year ago, I was called to the apartment of a 90-year-old woman by her son, who thought she was dying. The son was ready to accept that it was her time to die, but I told him that although she was critically ill, her problems might be remediable. After medication and a several-thousand-dollar hospital stay she is back at home, calling her son daily. In such cases, physicians cannot tell who will be saved by medical help and who will not. Is society ready to say that we no longer want to try? If so, at what age and on which illnesses should we quit? And to whom should we entrust these decisions? To imply that there are simple answers is misleading.

DEAN A. SHUEY, M.D.
Pullman, Washington

To the editors:

Governor Richard D. Lamm asks, "How many Barney Clarks can this country afford?" The article poses, I think, an even more pressing question: How many Governor Lamms can this country afford?

DEBORAH SCADUTO-HORN
Boston, Massachusetts

A WIZ OF A WHIZZER

To the editors:

Nathan Lewin is both accurate and perceptive in recognizing that a change in Justice Byron White's judicial philosophy has been a key factor in recent Supreme Court decisions ("White's Flight," TNR, August 27). But what Mr. Lewin fails to note is that Justice White's judicial philosophy on crime, court-ordered busing, hiring quotas, and the separation of church and state is also supported by the vast majority of Americans. Mr. Lewin and other liberals need to ask why the Supreme Court's decisions are so popular, even among people who consider themselves Democrats. The answer is that some of the reforms enacted by previous Courts violated the very principles of social justice that they were intended to advance. New criminal procedures allowed those who were guilty to go free; poor children were forced to attend schools their parents did not want (while those who ordered or supported the busing could choose the schools for their children); and young white males who had nothing to do with discrimination were denied employment at the behest of "liberal" judges and lawyers who were gaining prestige and power. Even more damaging to liberalism is the assumption behind these ill-considered reforms: that some questions are too serious to be decided by the majority of citizens. To the extent that the change in Justice White's philosophy serves to reassert the principle that government derives its power from the consent of the governed, his recent decisions should be welcomed as a return to the basic values of liberalism.

LAWRENCE W. HYMAN
Ridgewood, New Jersey

STEEL CURTAIN

To the editors:

It's true, as TRB says, that a ton of American-made steel costs more than a ton of Brazilian-made steel ("A Ton of Steel," TNR, August 27). But he ignores the massive subsidies provided by the Brazilian government to their steel industry, making their production costs totally unrelated to their selling costs. It's also true that a quota on imported steel might lead to an increase in the price of steel, but the Congressional Budget Office estimate of a $7.7 billion cost to consumers cited by TRB is misleading. The respected Congressional Research Service estimates that the cost to consumers would be offset by a gain to the economy of $6.1 billion in increased tax revenues. In addition, increased industry sales would mean $28 billion in higher G.N.P. and add at least 112,000 jobs. TRB forgets that each steel job lost—or saved—has a ripple effect, supporting an additional 2.35 jobs with suppliers, retailers, and others. Put an-

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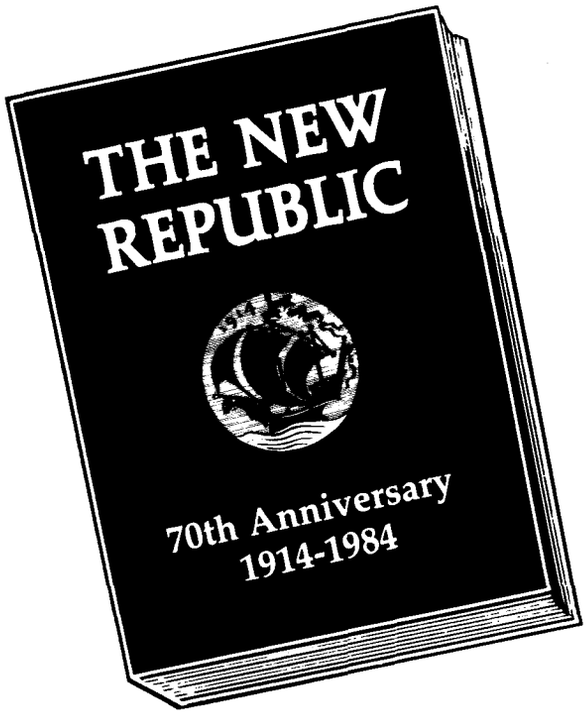
"Don't give up the ship."



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FROM WASHINGTON

JUNIOR BIRDMEN

The Reagan Administration pretends to believe in capitalism, but what it really believes in is business. To appreciate the difference, consider the Administration's handling of the so-called crisis of airport overcrowding.

The nation's media and Washington policymakers have been obsessed all summer with the specter of America's greatest asset—her businessmen—sitting idle for hours on runways throughout the land, often polluting their creative juices with alcohol, waiting to take off. Thanks to airline deregulation and the economic boom, more planes are attempting to use the country's biggest airports at peak periods than the air traffic control system can handle. The Administration's solution was to give the airlines immunity from the antitrust laws and invite them to divvy up the available slots among themselves. The airlines duly met, and their handiwork now awaits the approval of the Civil Aeronautics Board.

From the free market point of view, the Reaganites picked the worst of the three possible solutions to this problem. A central tenet of capitalism is that competitors should *not* be allowed (let alone ordered) to conspire on the terms of competition. Only a capitalist zealot who doesn't know the doctrines of his own church would suppose that such a conspiracy is superior to direct government regulation, if those are the only alternatives.

The published F.A.A. plan for enforcing the airlines' deal turns it into a virtual cartel agreement. Anyone who was not at the table when the slots were handed around is out of luck. All that newcomers can do is to "request . . . slots . . . that are not already assigned." Of course there aren't any unassigned slots at the desirable times. These slots were what the fuss was all about. So expect no new People Expresses, and fewer fare wars, as long as this agreement lasts.

The correct capitalist solution to airport overcrowding would be to auction off desirable takeoff and landing slots. People needing to fly during the morning and evening rush hours, and airlines catering to these heavyweights, could pay for the privilege. Others could save money by flying at other times.

The most irritating thing about the approach the F.A.A. chose instead is the way it preserves the privileges of America's least deserving group of welfare recipients, operators of private airplanes. Many readers probably have had the experience of sitting in a packed and immobile commercial plane, watching a tiny two-seater or small corporate jet taxiing for takeoff. The general rule of the F.A.A. is first come, first served. Scheduled commercial flights get no preference over private planes that simply show up in the sky or on the taxiway and demand the attention of the control tower. Ninety-four percent of the passenger miles flown each year are on commercial flights, but 211,000 private planes (eighty-four times the size of the commercial fleet) account for half of all control tower-assisted takeoffs and landings. Even at the busiest commercial airports, about 16 percent of the flights are private planes, which require just as much takeoff and landing time as the largest commercial jets, and even more of the control tower's attention.

Eliminating private planes from crowded airports would go a long way toward solving the overcrowding problem. Instead, under the F.A.A. plan, they will be guaranteed a fixed number of slots per hour. At Washington National Airport, which has operated under a quota system for several years, eight of fifty-eight hourly slots are reserved for private planes, no matter how long regular flights must wait. Under an auction, only the most desperate or egomaniacal private plane operator would attempt to outbid the airlines for the right to take off at 5 P.M. on Friday.

Jetting peremptorily around the country in private planes is one of the badges of great success in our economic system, reserved for very rich people and very important corporate executives. Fine. If that's how they want to spend their money, or their stockholders' money. But no tenet of capitalism requires the taxpayers to subsidize this *folie des grandeurs*, which we do in several ways, under the watchful gaze of the ferocious "general aviation" lobby.

Federal spending on airports and air traffic control is financed largely by an 8 percent tax on airline tickets and a twelve-cents-a-gallon tax on private airplane fuel. The Congressional Budget Office calculates that the airline ticket tax pays for more than commercial travelers' fair share of federal expenses, while the fuel tax covers only one-eighth of the cost burden private planes put on the system. In the next five years, the federal government will spend over $5 billion in direct, unrecovered subsidy of private flying.

Airport landing fees are generally set by weight. This means that at most airports, private jets pay about one-twentieth as much to land as commercial airliners, even though they place a roughly equivalent burden on the facilities. It costs $169 for a DC-10 to land at Atlanta Hartsfield Airport, for example, compared to $6 for a Learjet eight-seater. At Washington National, which (unlike most airports) is run by the F.A.A., even the per-pound charge is one-third lower for private planes.

The Reagan tax laws, ostensibly intended to stimulate productive investment, lavishly subsidize the "investment" in private planes. When I called a local Piper dealer here in Washington, the man who answered the phone gave me a detailed fifteen-minute lecture on how, what with the 10 percent investment tax credit and the five-year depreciation writeoff and deducting the interest on the financing, a million-dollar plane would cost me practically nothing. Provided, of course, that I was in a high enough tax bracket.

Next time you're queued up behind one of these little critters at LaGuardia, you might pass the time by reminding yourself of President Reagan's favorite anecdote about being in a supermarket checkout line behind the guy buying sirloin with his food stamps. Only this is real life.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
OCTOBER 8, 1984

THE GOVERNOR AND THE BISHOPS

In the current political war over church and state it is beginning to look a bit like August 1918. All sides were well armed when the fighting began; most expected it to be short and decisive; and now that most everybody has had enough, no one seems to know quite how to end it. One of the fronts may even have been opened accidentally. When Archbishop John J. O'Connor of New York opined that he didn't see how a Catholic could in good conscience vote for a candidate who supports abortion, he may not have intended to touch off a major confrontation with Catholic politicians. He did. Governor Mario Cuomo of New York took the unusual step of challenging his Archbishop publicly and forcing him to "clarify" his position. The clarification took the form of an improbable denial by Archbishop O'Connor that he had ever intended to tell Catholics how to vote.

Now, Mr. Cuomo's motives are not that clear either. Certainly, as he has acknowledged publicly, he was trying on behalf of liberals and Democrats to keep the "religion issue" from falling completely into President Reagan's cupped hands. Additionally, he may have been trying to preempt, to defuse, or perhaps simply to test the abortion issue for himself, something any Catholic politician who aspires to the Presidency must do these days.

In any case (and to settle on a single metaphor), the governor did not take Archbishop O'Connor's brushback pitch with a smile, the traditional response of Catholic politicians. Mr. Cuomo charged the mound and precipitated a rhubarb. Catholic politicians and prelates have come pouring off their respective benches to join in the brawl. The New England bishops rushed in behind Archbishop O'Connor, saying that, yes, abortion is *the* issue of our time and candidates should be judged by their position on it. Senator Kennedy weighed in on Mr. Cuomo's side with a speech to the Coalition of Conscience on September 10 defending Catholic politicians who take a pro-choice stand.

And in the middle of it all, pinned beneath a pile of players, lay poor Geraldine Ferraro. Ms. Ferraro, the most reluctant participant in this exercise, has become by far the most heavily involved. Perhaps because she is a woman; perhaps because her Catholic identity is so frankly part of her political appeal; perhaps because her political opponents have decided to target her in the hope of neutralizing the Democrats' most formidable campaign asset this year—for whatever reason, she has been harassed at practically every campaign stop by determined, sometimes loud, often abusive demonstrators. The pickets wave signs of varying degrees of bad taste. One shows a basketful of dead fetuses under the heading "Gerry's kids." Another, offering a précis of the President's Dallas prayer breakfast speech, proclaims "Reaganism vs. Paganism." What is so distasteful about these demonstrators is that they act like fundamentalists of the narrowest kind, interested only in denunciation and not at all in debate.

The response of the Democratic Vice Presidential candidate, though restrained, has not been very sophisticated. She speaks affectingly in commonsense terms, saying that though she opposes abortion, she thinks that if her daughter were pregnant as the result of a rape she might well go along with ending the pregnancy. Beyond that, she says there is a difference between public and private belief, as if invoking that distinction settles the question. She does not consider how the two might be related. Mr. Cuomo has taken up exactly that question. On September 13 he delivered a quite extraordinary meditation—it is hard to describe a closely argued, 8,000-word address to the Department of Theology at Notre Dame as a speech—that has endowed the current church-state debate with a seriousness and depth rarely seen in the American political arena.

So serious and closely argued an address deserves serious and close scrutiny. First, it is important to recognize what Mr. Cuomo does not say. He refuses the secular defense preferred by groups like People for the American Way, the civil libertarian lobby which, having slumbered peacefully through the mixing of religion and politics in the Jackson Presidential campaign and the bishops' pastoral letter on nuclear arms, has now awakened to defend the

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sacred wall of separation. On the Sunday after Mr. Cuomo spoke, P.A.W. took out a full-page ad in *The New York Times* to reproduce approvingly parts of John F. Kennedy's famous 1960 speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association. "I want a Chief Executive," Mr. Kennedy said then, ". . . whose fulfillment of his Presidential office is not limited or conditioned by any religious oath, ritual, or obligation." In other words, who will act like anyone else, of any other church, free of any religious influence.

That's a perfectly honorable and reasonable position to take. No one demands religiosity of a politician. A certain respect for religious rituals and decorum, yes. But until Jimmy Carter, devoutness had not been a requirement for Presidents. Mr. Cuomo argues differently. He told his audience at Notre Dame, "I speak here as . . . a Catholic . . . attached to the church first by birth, then by choice, now by love. . . . The Catholic Church is my spiritual home. My heart is there and my hope." And as the title of his address indicates, his intent was to try to reconcile, not divorce, "religious belief and public morality." And the perspective, as the subtitle indicates, is not a governor's but "a Catholic governor's."

HAVING ESTABLISHED this difficult ground for his argument, Mr. Cuomo comes directly to the cutting issue between him and the hierarchy: abortion. He declares, "I accept the church's teaching authority." He finds "church doctrine [on abortion] . . . in full agreement with what our hearts and our consciences told us." But he then denies the bishops' contention that he must therefore be committed, as citizen and governor, to a civil law banning abortions for everyone.

The crux of his case is an appeal to what he calls Catholic realism. A Constitutional ban on abortion would be disruptive and socially divisive. It would expose Catholics to the charge of intolerant imposition of their views on others. And it would fail even in its own terms: it would not work. The practice would continue in the backrooms. Furthermore, political prudence dictates that in a pluralist, democratic society "the breadth, intensity, and sincerity of opposition to church teaching" should be taken into account by Catholics, not because the opposition is right (the opposition view "should not be allowed to shape our Catholic morality") but because "it can't help but determine our ability—our realistic, political ability—to translate our Catholic morality into civil law."

The principle, therefore, is pragmatism. "The values derived from religious belief will not—and should not—be accepted as part of the public morality unless they are shared by the pluralistic community at large, by consensus." With "should not" Mr. Cuomo goes beyond mere acceptance of the pragmatic principle. He blesses it.

Catholic realism has a distinguished pedigree. It is a derivative of John Courtney Murray's defense of religious pluralism on the grounds of "civil peace." (See "The Church-State Debate," by Charles Krauthammer, TNR, September 17 & 24.) But realism is a defense of considerable complexity. The rub is that if Catholic realism justifies one's position on abortion, it should apply to other moral questions as well. But does it apply to, say, racial discrimination? At the time of the debate over the Civil Rights Act of 1964, it could have been argued—it was argued—that the abolition of segregation would cause serious social disruption and deep resistance. Moreover, there was certainly no consensus for civil rights. There was a majority, to be sure, but that majority had to shove civil rights down the throat of a recalcitrant South. If the argument had prevailed in 1964 that changes in public morality will not—should not—be enacted in the absence of a consensus, we might still be awaiting passage of the Civil Rights Act.

WHY DOES the pragmatic principle apply to abortion and not to civil rights? Mr. Cuomo is not unaware of the problem. He has two responses. One is, frankly, to change the subject: "Let's make some other analogies," Mr. Cuomo said on ABC's "Nightline" program the night of his Notre Dame address. The Catholic Church, which teaches that birth control and homosexuality and adultery are also morally wrong, "has decided, in the exercise of prudential judgment, not to seek to impose that on the rest of the community."

But no one claims that all religious morality must be translated into civil law—only issues of ultimate importance, issues that involve affronts of the gravest sort to human dignity. Discrimination is no doubt one such issue. It is hard to see how, if one accepts the church teaching that abortion is the taking of innocent human life, one can fail to regard abortion as another. On the other hand, it is not hard to see how one can plausibly exclude birth control, adultery, and homosexuality. They are of a different order of magnitude. Again, why realism for abortion, not for racism?

The second response is an appeal to history. Catholic realism, argues Mr. Cuomo, has such strong historical roots that in the years before the Civil War the Catholic hierarchy in the United States did not call for the abolition of slavery. "The decision they made to remain silent on the Constitutional amendment to abolish slavery or on the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law was not a mark of their moral indifference," said Mr. Cuomo. "It was a measured attempt to balance moral truths against political realities. Their decision reflected their sense of complexity, not their diffidence." It is this exercise of political discretion (as well as the last minute caveat in the bishops' recent pastoral letter on nuclear weapons, which says that their policy judgments are not necessarily the only way to achieve justice in the nuclear world) that Mr. Cuomo cites as evidence of the "American Catholic tradition of political realism."

This is all very true, and very curious. A liberal Catholic not only places himself in the anti-abolitionist tradition; he invokes it as a present-day guide for reconciling religious with public morality. One may sympathize with the bishops' dilemma in the 1850s. But does Mr. Cuomo really approve of their position, even in the context of their time? Certainly he would not take the equivalent anti-

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abolitionist position today with respect to racism. Why, then, with respect to abortion?

Perhaps because he believes that abortion is less serious a violation of human dignity than racism. Perhaps that is what his birth control analogy is meant to convey: that he considers abortion to be in a moral category of contraception, not murder. But that is not quite his position.The church teaches that abortion is the taking of human life, and Mr. Cuomo says he accepts, indeed embraces, that teaching. Perhaps Mr. Cuomo is signaling, if not quite saying, that he accepts the church's teaching as a matter of faith but does not thoroughly believe it intellectually, a kind of unconscious doublethink.

There is perhaps another response. One could justify a reluctance to make anti-abortion the law not so much on the grounds of religious realism as of humility. Antidiscrimination is based on the belief that black people are fully human. It is a belief one can hold with absolute certainty that one is right—and that anyone who believes otherwise holds a position so implausible and so mendacious as to forfeit respect, indeed, to invite *force majeure*. On the other hand, anti-abortion is based on the belief that a fertilized egg is fully human. One can perhaps believe that and at the same time not believe that the contrary belief is outrageous and implausible. One might then be less willing to force one's view on dissenters through law, out of respect for the *substance* of the opposing view, not merely its political strength, as the "pragmatic" principle would have it. One would await, and through noncoercive persuasion try to create, a consensus (a mere majority being insufficient on issues which threaten the civil peace). This is a precarious, perhaps Protestant, position to take. Nevertheless, it is consistent with liberal theories of toleration, which are based on the assumption that no single view has a monopoly of truth.

We do not normally commit theology, but then again neither, normally, do governors. In these abnormal times, we have followed the lead—and the logic—of a leading liberal's serious inquiry into the tension between private belief and public responsibility. Such arguments may work themselves to the head of a pin. But that is not to deny that they are often of great intellectual and even political interest. What they do not lend themselves to is partisan (still less, electoral) politics.

We hope the discussion will continue, but away from the glare of headlines and the calculation of electoral votes. Those who would turn these ethical dilemmas into clubs with which to beat their political opponents are doing democracy, to say nothing of the discourse itself, a disservice. We commend Mr. Cuomo for his courage in exploring so seriously so difficult an issue. As he freely admits, he may not have solved the problem; but he has illuminated it in a refreshing and candid way. We hope that those who go around carrying placards with the names of Mr. Cuomo and Ms. Ferraro and other conscientious Catholics dripping with blood will learn from his example. They might start by trying to emulate his moral seriousness and his civil manner.

NOTEBOOK

□ IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE more dramatic or decisive evidence of the collapse of liberal Republicanism—as an idea and as a force—than Elliot Richardson's defeat for the senatorial nomination in Massachusetts. That he fell to an ultraconservative political neophyte, Raymond Shamie, and by a margin of nearly two to one, only adds to the humiliation and to the impression of historical finality. Not so long ago, after all, the more enlightened stream in the G.O.P. was alive and well in the Bay State. Of course it was also alive elsewhere, but nowhere so powerfully as in Massachusetts. It was only a decade ago that the great state house on Beacon Street was occupied by Francis Sargent, in his time perhaps the nation's most humanely inventive governor; and another liberal Republican, Edward Brooke, then still represented Massachusetts in the U.S. Senate. There would be no place for him now among the yahoos who run the party. What was the vocation of the liberal Republicans? After the battle, Eugene McCarthy once said, they came to shoot the wounded as an act of mercy. Certainly they softened the stone heart of their party and of their class. Elliot Richardson was the last of a breed, and he had the traits of the last of this breed, vaguely decent but at once indecisive and haughty. He was born with a good résumé, and it got steadily better as he advanced from office to office. He was Secretary of Defense and of Health, Education, and Welfare, as well as Attorney General. In none of these posts did he make an especially noteworthy record. He is remembered mostly for something he refused to do: firing Archibald Cox as the Watergate special prosecutor. It was a brave refusal, but skeptics wondered whether he would have done the same for someone wearing a different school tie or hailing from a different social class. When he came back to Massachusetts to run this year, more than a little diffidently, he also seemed more than ordinately ill at ease. What one has to do to win in Massachusetts politics now, in Massachusetts Republican politics no less than among the traditionally cruder Democrats, is something Brahmins find distasteful. Power, they seem still to be thinking to themselves, ought to flow to them naturally. It doesn't. Mr. Richardson would have had an easier time running for the Board of Overseers of Harvard College. But he might not have won there either; the whole world has changed. And really over a very short time. Mr. Richardson's immediate political ancestors dominated more than Republican politics in Massachusetts; they ran the party nationally. It's barely three decades since the center of the party could gather for lunch and plot its future in Boston's exclusive Somerset Club. In 1952 it was Henry Cabot Lodge, Leverett Saltonstall, Christian Herter, Sinclair Weeks, and Winthrop Aldrich, who, through the political and financial clout they wielded nationally, denied Robert Taft, "Mr. Republican," his party's nomination for President and gave it, after a bitter campaign and convention, to Dwight Eisen-

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hower. The old names have now receded into history, in our consciousness almost into colonial history. And now their party is not even the party of a Taft but of Ronald Reagan and a nasty reactionary called Raymond Shamie.

□ FIFTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "Opposition to Hitler's 'totalitarianism' is developing in Germany from a new and unexpected source. While the Third Reich waged vigorous warfare against the Roman Catholic Church, it seemed as if the Protestant clergy had come to an understanding with the National Socialist government. In the last few weeks all this has changed. The first attempt actually to establish the rule of the (Nazi) German Christians over the Protestant Church found the clergy and the congregation in open resistance against the heresies of the new regime." (The Editors, "The Week," October 10, 1934.)

Reagan is wrong, Mondale is righteous.

NO-FUSS BUDGETS

YOU CAN quibble with Walter Mondale's plan to reduce the federal budget deficit, but at least he has a plan. Where is President Reagan's plan? In response to Mondale's serious attempt to grapple with the nation's most pressing economic issue, unveiled September 10, Reagan snorted: "We see an America where every day is the Fourth of July, and they see an America where every day is April 15." Some "conservatives" now insist that the deficits aren't a serious problem at all. But not Reagan. He still denounces them like sin itself. Then he changes the subject.

Can he get away with this? Probably. The heart grows weary at the task of pointing out the absurdities, self-contradictions, and simple whoppers Reagan has uttered on the deficit issue. They are so obvious, yet no one outside Minnesota and the District of Columbia seems to care. Just for old time's sake, here are the main ones:

(1.) *The deficits are not Reagan's fault. They are the fault of big spenders in Congress.* A lie. "Take a look at the budgets I've already submitted, and look at the cuts that I've asked for and was not given," Reagan said September 12. O.K., let's. For the first three complete fiscal years of Ronald Reagan's Administration, 1982 through 1984, Congress spent $2.37 trillion. The budgets Reagan submitted would have entailed spending of over $2.34 trillion. Reagan proposed to spend the money somewhat differently: deeper cuts in social programs, bigger increases in defense. But in calculating the deficit, the mix of spending is irrelevant. The difference between Reagan's total spending plans and Congress's actual spending was a trivial $26 billion over three years—one-twentieth of the $478 billion federal deficit during that period. Reagan got almost exactly the spending level he wanted. And he got *more* tax revenues than he wanted, due to a tax bill he is eager to say was shoved down his throat in 1982. Thanks to Congress, the deficit is actually smaller than it would have been otherwise.

SOMETIMES REAGAN blames the deficits on his Democratic predecessor, or predecessors, going back fifty years. This is a lie, too. This year's deficit is three times as big as any run up before Reagan took office, and the previous record is held by a Republican, Gerald Ford. Today's deficit is a direct result of Reagan's two central accomplishments: his defense buildup and his tax cut for corporations and affluent individuals.

(2.) *Reagan will only raise taxes as "a last resort."* Absurd. Where is the first resort? The image is of a man trying this, trying that, scratching his head, waiting for the results before doing anything rash. In fact, Reagan has neither done nor proposed anything specific to address a deficit that the Congressional Budget Office says will grow to over $250 billion by 1989, *even if times stay good.* If Reagan thinks he can close this gap without raising taxes, let us see the color of his money. In truth, there are plenty of ways nondefense spending could be cut further, but few that would save much money without offending lots of voters. If raising taxes is the "last resort," does this mean that Reagan would sooner resort to cutting Social Security and farm price supports? I'd like to hear him say so.

(3.) *Robust growth, plus further modest spending restraint, can do the trick.* Reagan: "If that rate of increase in spending can be brought down, as we've brought it down already, if at the same time, through economic growth, the rate of revenues begins to climb at a steeper rate, those two lines have to meet, and where they meet is a balanced budget." It is a favorite conceit of Treasury Secretary Donald Regan that we don't really need to cut spending; we just need to cut the rate of increase. True enough, but little comfort. The projected increases in federal spending are not for new programs. They are to cover inflation and demographic changes, such as an aging population, in programs people are already enjoying. Even slowing the rate of increase in spending will require actually reducing someone's benefits—a farmer, a federal pensioner, a hospitalized retiree, who? Where's the beef?

As for growth, even the horrendous C.B.O. deficit estimate is based on an optimistic forecast of more than 3 percent growth every year for six years. That would mean a prodigious eight consecutive years without a recession. Sure, we might do even better than that. And I might win the D.C. lottery. But is it responsible leadership to count on this? The deficit itself, by keeping interest rates high and the dollar overvalued, is one of the biggest threats to continued robust growth.

(4.) *The Grace Commission has come up with "2,478 specific recommendations for improving the management of government."* Oh, please. Reagan brought this one up again on September 11, even though in August he helped to torpe-

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do one of the Grace Commission's most sensible proposals: selling federal hydroelectric power for what it's worth, instead of dirt cheap. Most of the Grace Commission recommendations would affect constituencies that Ronald Reagan is no more eager to offend than Walter Mondale is. That's why he hasn't actually endorsed any of them.

(5.) *Give him the line-item veto, and stand back!* Pure bluff. If the President could pick and choose among federal programs to veto, instead of having to accept or reject entire appropriations bills, he might well be able to save a bundle of money. So what would he cut? Naturally, he won't say, because saying would cost him votes. Even without the line-item veto, the President is free to *propose* a budget with lots of expensive items cut out of it. Where is President Reagan's list?

(6.) *A balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.* Reagan has personally quadrupled the distance from where we sit to a balanced budget. And he refuses, of course, to say how he would balance the budget—whose programs he would cut, whose taxes he would raise—if required to do so by the amendment he claims to want so badly. The heart sinks.

REAGAN'S spectacular ability to mesmerize the nation into thinking it's watching him tackle the deficit, when he's really just up there talking, makes Mondale's modest efforts at budgetary legerdemain look sick. Mondale starts from the C.B.O.'s estimate that, on our present course, the 1989 budget deficit will be $263 billion in 1989. He proposes to cut spending by $75 billion, and to raise $85 billion in new tax revenue. Treating himself to an extra $17 billion in revenue from economic growth, caused by the splendor of his policies, Mondale calculates a deficit of $86 billion, thus fulfilling his pledge to reduce the miserable thing two-thirds by the end of his first term.

Mondale's "plan" weighs in at a flimsy seven pages, somewhat disappointing to economics writers, who like a thick tome full of numbers to burrow into. On crucial matters, it's rather vague. Obviously the vagueness is calculated (though not as calculated as Reagan's refusal to commit himself at all). This is a document scared of its own shadow.

On the spending side, Mondale has found $75 billion of "cuts" for 1989 that don't appear to touch a single substantive activity of the government to which a voter might feel attached, except defense. Over two-thirds, $51 billion, would be savings in interest on the national debt, thanks to smaller deficits in previous years. Another $12 billion would come from "comprehensive cost containment" in health care. The federal government would set limits, and states would be "free to design their own strategies." You figure it out, fellas. Similar "prudent management" of the farm price support system would save $4 billion, even "while improving farm incomes." Wonderful, isn't it? Another $5 billion would come from things like "upgrading government computers" and "better management of vehicle fleets."

Mondale would forthrightly restore $30 billion of Reagan's cuts in social programs. Then he would recoup $8 billion by "reducing the rate of increase by about half for programs not selected for enhancement." This is Donald Regan's bluff again. The cost of established programs isn't rising because of too much yeast. Cutting even the increase means cutting people's benefits.

Finally, Mondale would save $25 billion in 1989 alone by holding military spending to 3 or 4 percent real growth a year, compared to Reagan's more lavish plans—and compared also to Mondale's own proposed zero real growth in most social welfare programs. Mondale would dump the MX missile and the B-1, but proceed with the Midgetman ICBM and the stealth bomber. This is hardly an agenda that evokes the spirit of Munich.

Mondale's tax proposal is a special disappointment. In the Bradley-Gephardt plan, the Democrats have the best and most widely publicized current idea for broad tax reform. Yet Mondale cannot bring himself to officially embrace it. He is leaving the popular tax reform issue completely to the Republicans. Why? The answer appears to be fear of offending voters who are attached to various loopholes that Bradley-Gephardt—like any broad tax reform—would reduce or eliminate. (The home mortgage interest deduction, for example, would be limited to 14 percent.) Lower tax rates would more than compensate most people for losing their loopholes, but this takes some explaining, otherwise known as leadership. Fighting Fritz. Sigh.

So instead of a bracing reform proposal that would give him something positive to talk about, Mondale has come up with a defensive series of gimmicks that would actually make the tax code more complex, while keeping his pledge to "hold harmless" families making less than $25,000 a year.

He would "defer" inflation indexing for families making over $25,000; repeal the third year of Reagan's tax cut for the part of any couple's income over $60,000 a year; and add a 10 percent tax surcharge on the part of any couple's income over $100,000. These three changes would raise an estimated $46 billion in 1989. Though Mondale has made a big drama of his surcharge on the $100,000-plus crowd, this would bring in only about $6 billion. Half to two-thirds of the $46 billion would come from repeal of indexing, a backdoor tax increase that mainly hits the people closest to his $25,000 floor.

IN ADDITION, Mondale says he would collect $25 billion by cracking down on tax shelters and by a 15 percent minimum tax on corporations, $10 billion through "improved compliance," and $4 billion by putting off again some nickel-and-dime Reagan tax favors for rich people that Congress has already put off once.

Mondale's tax plan illustrates the pundits' favorite tax maxim that you can't raise much money without touching the middle class. (Quote Willie Sutton here: "that's where the money is.") And Mondale deserves credit for doing so. But the Mondale plan illustrates something else as well: because there are so many middle-class taxpayers, you

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don't have to touch any one of them very hard. Mondale's plan would cost the typical $30,000-a-year family a mere $95 a year. A $50,000 family would be out $475. That covers more than 90 percent of all American families, and probably 99 percent of all potential Mondale voters.

Yet we're told that Mondale's tax increase is a political disaster. Can this really be true? Is it really so unreasonable to ask the average family to invest $95 in its own and the nation's prosperity? Is the "New Patriotism" incapable of eliciting such a minor sacrifice in such an important cause? And is our political system really so rigid that it will punish even the tepid act of leadership involved in asking for that sacrifice? The heart sinks.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

Mitterrand throws a Laffer curve.

SUPPLY-SIDE SOCIALISM

SIX MONTHS AGO, the program might have been mistaken for a right-wing manifesto. Economically, it calls for investment-stimulating tax cuts to spur France's sluggish recovery, sharp reductions in government spending, and an emphasis on industrial modernization rather than on reducing unemployment. Politically, it includes the withdrawal of a controversial bill furthering state control over the predominantly Catholic private schools, an end to Communist participation in the government, and the increased use of Charles de Gaulle's favorite political instrument, the referendum. In fact, this program represents the new approach by François Mitterrand's Socialist government to economic stagnation and political stalemate. And it thus represents a complete switch from the policies of nationalization, full employment, and income redistribution with which Mitterrand inaugurated his presidency in May 1981. Such a change of direction, the sharpest by any government of the Fifth Republic, has opened a period of self-questioning on the French left.

Many are now seriously asking whether French socialism has a future. It is a question that Mitterrand has done his best to avoid. After only thirteen months in office, he began to replace his initial, ambitious goals with "austerity policies." Over the next two years, his emphasis on tight fiscal management and the "restructuring" of French industry intensified, and last March he even spoke to American businessmen in New York about *une politique de l'offre à la française*—supply-side economics, French style. At the same time, however, he continued to maintain the fiction that his policies had not really changed. In an interview last May with the Paris daily *Libération*, he defended both a new, Reaganesque 5 to 8 percent reduction in income taxes, accompanied by deep cuts in public spending; and his commitment to eliminate superfluous jobs in the steel industry despite violent protests. He described the period of austerity as a necessary "parenthesis" in his project of social reform.

While postponing the economic agenda set forth in the 1981 campaign, Mitterrand continued to pursue his political agenda, most notably the item, anathema to the Catholic right, calling for a "unified, secular public school system." Education Minister Alain Savary's reform package actually fell short of this goal, but his plan to submit private school teachers to state accreditation was enough to re-ignite an issue that has divided France for a century. Thanks to the school issue, the polarization of left and right remained as strong as it had been during Mitterrand's first year in office.

Could the left combine fiscal conservatism and political radicalism and retain popular support? Last spring, the weaknesses of such a strategy became painfully apparent. As unemployment rose toward 10 percent, and the government faced the probable layoff of a quarter of the auto industry's work force by 1988—the year Mitterrand comes up for reelection—Communists and dissident Socialists aggressively began to criticize the twin policies of austerity and industrial modernization. Meanwhile, on the right, the defenders of the private schools, seeking to press their issue, brought up to a million people to march in Paris on June 24, in France's largest single political demonstration since the Liberation. To add to their misery, the ruling parties had lost the European elections a week before with a humiliating 31.9 percent of the votes cast; and Mitterrand's Communist allies barely edged out Jean-Marie Le Pen's overtly racist National Front.

FACED WITH a political impasse, Mitterrand reacted with the audacity allowed, and even encouraged, by Charles de Gaulle's constitution. On July 12 he withdrew the school bill and proposed instead a referendum to modify the constitution so as to permit further referendums on "civil liberties" issues such as public education. Then while the vacationing nation was still trying to figure out exactly what this proposal would mean, he accepted Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy's resignation—provoked by his handling of the school issue—and replaced Mauroy with his own protégé, Laurent Fabius, the cool technocrat who had supervised the industrial modernization program. And finally, he reshuffled his cabinet, eliminating the Communists.

This astonishing shift to the right has thrown French politics into pandemonium. The right-wing opposition, which could once happily castigate Mitterrand for his "archaic" Prime Minister, his "liberticidal" school bill, and his "disastrous" economic policies has suddenly found itself, as the weekly *Express* caustically observed, with no more Communists, no more Pierre Mauroy, no more school bill, and no great objections to the government's economic line. In an embarrassing reversal of roles, the opposition-controlled Senate found itself blocking Mitterrand's proposed de Gaulle-style referendum with the pre-

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cise arguments once advanced by Mitterrand against de Gaulle himself.

Yet the President's *coups de théâtre* have done as much to unsettle his own political camp as they have to confound the opposition. The Communists have lost no time proclaiming themselves the authentic voice of the left, decrying the "noxious consequences" of the government's new course. But the Communists, despite their capacity to promote industrial chaos through their influence in the labor movement, play an increasingly irrelevant political role; their popularity is lower than at any time since 1928. It is the governing Socialists, compelled to austerity by the state of the economy, and to abandon their political agenda because of their own unpopularity, who face the real dilemma. As economist Michel Cicurel quips, "their journey to power has deflowered them."

THE SOCIALISTS' situation has a discouraging historical precedent. During the first years of the Fifth Republic, the French right, partly discredited by their collaboration during Vichy and partly by their later desperate opposition to Algerian independence, rallied to the imposing figure of Charles de Gaulle. Yet as political scientist René Rémond observes, de Gaulle—who considered himself above politics-as-usual—was not a conservative. His "deepest wish was to embody the unity of the nation . . . he never resigned himself to being the leader of a simple political majority." In fact, de Gaulle pursued interventionist economic policies and never outlined a coherent political strategy for the right. Largely as a result of this, his political heirs have never developed a coherent political movement of their own. Today the phrase "the opposition" encompasses former President Giscard d'Estaing's bickering coalition of center parties, the "neo-Gaullist" party of Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac, and Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front. (The discomforting success of Le Pen's party in August's Corsican regional elections confronts the other right-wing parties with a power-sharing problem of their own.) Due to this incoherence on the right, no purely partisan group had taken over the Fifth Republic's powerful executive machinery until the Socialist victory in 1981.

Now it appears that the Socialists are repeating the right-wing pattern. Forced to adopt policies diametrically opposed to the 1981 platform, François Mitterrand has had little choice but to defend them as being "above politics," representing a national interest that transcends partisan ones. Of course, this position corresponds precisely to Charles de Gaulle's conception of the presidency he created: an office above the factional squabbling of Parliament, representative of the whole nation.

Mitterrand came late to socialism—he founded the present party in 1971—and adopted its tenets with a convert's zeal, which manifested itself clearly in the doctrinaire 1981 platform. But now, after three years in power, his commitment to a single political movement seems halfhearted. And like the right under de Gaulle, the Socialist Party has little choice but to follow its leader. A case in point is Jean-Pierre Chevènement, leader of a left-wing parliamentary socialist group, who resigned as Minister of Research and Industry during the government's long march rightward. By May 1983, Chevènement charged that "there is nothing particularly socialist about the assumptions behind the present economic policy," and said that "if I thought we would succeed, I would have stayed in the government." After the European elections last June, Chevènement insisted that "the left must come up with a different political strategy and mobilize its hard core." Yet now, along with four other members of his group, he has accepted a post in the cabinet of Prime Minister Fabius. With the credibility of his own program damaged by the Socialists' first-year failures, Chevènement had little choice but to endorse Mitterrand, a man whose magnetism makes him the undisputed leader of the party.

Significantly, Mitterrand gave Chevènement the education portfolio, and asked him to work out a quick compromise with the Church on the school issue. This move is one more illustration of the President's political skill, and of his new self-image. It transforms Chevènement from the self-proclaimed conscience of his party into another crusader for the "national interest."

The Socialists' parliamentary mandate lasts until 1986, and its presidential one until 1988. But the economy shows little sign of permitting the erstwhile "parenthesis" of austerity to end before either date. The Socialists, therefore, will undoubtedly continue along their path of pragmatism for some time. Normally, this would be all to the good. Saddled with a sluggish recovery and a large foreign debt, France can hardly afford more social experimentation for the moment. Yet if François Mitterrand wants to avoid the eventual disintegration of his own party, with all its dangerous consequences, then he must avoid de Gaulle's example: that of a powerful President whose coalition falls apart when he leaves the scene. Unfortunately, de Gaulle's constitution entrusts the partisan task of dealing with Parliament to the Prime Minister, and allows the President to occupy a magisterial position above the political fray. This position can tempt a President into believing that he has a special mission to represent the "national interest" —and no particular duty to his own electorate.

The "national interest," however, does not always lie above party politics, because it depends on the strength of the party system. François Mitterrand's dramatic change of direction represents a chance to maintain that strength by forging a Socialist Party responsive to the realities of France in the late twentieth century. But he has failed to identify his policies with his party, preferring to identify them solely with the "national interest," personified in the presidency—in himself. For this reason, when he leaves the presidency, he may leave a void behind him.

DAVID A. BELL

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How Michnik cowed the Communists.

FEAR ON TRIAL

THE GENERAL lawlessness of Communist Poland has one beneficial by-product: frequent amnesties for political prisoners. There have been many of them in the history of postwar Poland, and they all bear witness to the simple fact that the regime does not take its own law seriously. Indeed, the rule of law, properly speaking, hardly exists in political matters. There are only government or party decrees. The rulers pack people into jail when they think it is politically useful, and they release them for the same reason; and there is usually no shortage of prosecutors and judges to do the job. (To be sure, not all judges are eager to sign verdicts made by party secretaries, but if they are not, they are easily eliminated.) Always, with only brief breaks, people have rotted in Poland's prisons for acts which civilized political regimes considered civic virtues.

One such break is in evidence now, although no one knows how long it will last. It is possible that new arrests will be made just after the last Solidarity activists have left prison. The amnesty specifically includes all political "criminals," both those sentenced and those awaiting trial. It is cause for relief that all those brave people are no longer behind iron bars, though the amnesty will not bring back to life several dozen young Solidarity men who have been murdered by so-called "unknown assailants," nor will it solve Poland's many important problems. The conspiratorial Solidarity network is going to exist, and underground publications and underground educational systems will continue, because nothing has happened that would justify their dismantlement.

"Reconciliation" is an empty word when all the normal rules of Communist despotism are in operation. They work less efficiently here, no doubt, than in other Soviet protectorates, yet the measure of their inefficiency corresponds exactly to the strength of the organized and unorganized popular resistance. To make them less efficient is, indeed, the immediate goal of the resistance. It is incapable of radically changing the regime, of course, as long as the regime is propped up everywhere by the Soviet tanks; still, it has proved adept at seriously impairing the totalitarian machinery.

Poland is a Communist country, but a bastardized Communist country: its rulers have largely given up the Communist ideology as the legitimizing principle of their power. Their goal is not to persuade people of the virtues of communism, but to educate them to slavery, to instill in them the mentality of serfs. The amnesty resulted from the failure of this education. Time and again the government offered freedom to prisoners—especially the four K.O.R. activists and the seven Solidarity leaders—at the price of permanent, and then only temporary, exile. It was not ashamed to make the offer public, thus implicitly demonstrating what it thought of its own laws. (In the first version of the indictment the activists could have earned the death penalty; and in the second version, ten years' imprisonment. But if they chose to confess, they were told in effect: "As a reward for your crimes, enjoy yourselves in Paris and London.") The prisoners refused. They were asked to sign a promise that they would forbear from political activity for a specific period (an unheard of negotiation in a Communist country). They refused. After two and a half years in prison, Jacek Kuron started a hunger strike, demanding a prompt trial. The government, after having looked for a way to avoid such an embarrassing show, finally bowed. The trial began; after two sessions it ended with the general amnesty.

The "humanitarian gesture" was ostensibly motivated by the government's hope for the abolition of American sanctions, Poland's admission to the International Monetary Fund, and some new loans. And it knew that the trials, far from revealing the defendants' guilt, would glaringly and disastrously demonstrate not only the grotesque character of the charges but its own illegality as well. The deeper reason for the amnesty, however, is to be found in the moral stand of the Solidarity people, in prison and at large. Had the police succeeded in breaking their will, extorting from some the pledge of loyalty or political inactivity and banishing others to the capitalist inferno, they could have settled both problems at no cost. Because they failed, the amnesty, which the government has awkwardly tried to depict as a symptom of "normalization," in fact represents the victory of Solidarity and of the entire resistance movement. It was extorted from the illegitimate regime by moral pressure, thus proving again that such pressure can work.

The moral strength of the prisoners and the conspirators was not simply a laudable personal trait. They resisted beatings, threats, brutalities, the prospect of long years in appalling prison conditions, because they knew that they expressed all the aspirations and grievances, all the desires and hopes, of their country. They incarnated the stifled life of Poland surviving under the dead burden of a system which is kept in power by a foreign empire.

AMONG THOSE who publicly expressed their views from behind the prison walls, Adam Michnik was the most articulate. He managed to smuggle out of his cell numerous articles and essays that quickly appeared in the Polish underground press and in various Western journals. (A few of them were included in his book, *The Chances of Polish Democracy*, published in Polish in London.) It goes without saying that almost every one of them could have been used as additional material in his indictment. He explained why he refused to sign any pledge of giving up "illegal activities," and why he rejected the offer of emigration. He analyzed various political options under the postwar conditions. (The "war" referred to is, in the current Polish idiom, the war declared by the Jaruzelski regime on the Polish population on December 13, 1981.) He often indulged in philosophical, moral, and historical

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reflections. The last article of his that I read discusses Turgenev's novel *Rudin*, depicting the misery of the Russian intelligentsia under Nicholas I.

Michnik's literary activity during these years is an extraordinary phenomenon in Polish life. Never before has an intellectual managed to stay so active in a Communist prison, to speak aloud and without inhibitions to his countrymen on all the most burning issues. He was not only heard—he became one of the most powerful voices of the democratic opposition.

MICHNIK IS an historian as well as an activist and a politician. (His trouble with the authorities started when he was in high school, his prison spells when he was a university student, in 1968.) All of his analyses are rooted in, and supported by, his detailed knowledge of the Polish political and intellectual past. He detects in our contemporary dilemmas the patterns we know so well from the long history of Polish struggles, hopes, disillusionments, victories, and failures that have marked the period of partition, from the end of the eighteenth century until 1918, the date of independence regained.

Michnik rejects the easy alternatives of "realism" and "moralism." He knows well that the slogan of "realism," purporting to dismiss ineffective moral gestures for the sake of facing the irresistible facts, is nothing but a euphemism for cowardice, a mask of servility. To deny that people's moral attitudes can play a decisive role in political struggles is to display a naïve pseudo-Machiavellianism. We do not face a dichotomy between a passive adjustment to the present reality (a mixture of despair and cowardice) and a foolish belief that anything can be done at any moment if only we have enough determination. Political compromises are necessary, moral compromises are unconditionally excluded. It is silly to expect that, having signed a pledge of loyalty and gained freedom, I can deceive the policeman and use this freedom to fight again. Instead I am morally destroyed and unable to act. But it is silly as well—though not morally repugnant—to take the "everything or nothing" attitude, and to say: as long as we cannot achieve sovereignty and democracy for Poland, small changes and improvements are not only meaningless, they are harmful, insofar as they nourish the delusion that by multiplying them we can reach our fundamental goals.

The strategy advocated by Michnik—and, for that matter, by most Solidarity leaders—is the "long march." Communism wins not by ideology but by desperation, not by making people Communists but by driving them into hopeless resignation (by producing a "new man of socialism"). The Poles will never be able to assert their political independence by waiting for a miraculous change in the international condition. They must assert their moral independence, rather, in these most adverse circumstances. Solidarity proved this to be possible.

It is risky and difficult, yet it is possible, to organize various forms of civil society—illegal, half-legal, or legal—whereby people affirm their will not to be mere subjects of manipulation by their nonelected leaders. Uncensored (and thus clandestine) press and books, educational work among high school students and university students and workers, mutual help organizations, underground unions, information-gathering—all this is needed. It both enfeebles the efficiency of the totalitarian machine, and keeps alive the spirit of mental sovereignty which is necessary to exploit all the possibilities offered by unexpected national or international events that may bring about political sovereignty. And violent actions are counterproductive; it is the police who are the most interested in provoking them.

In short, there is no conflict between a realistic assessment of the situation and the stubborn refusal to make moral concessions. Against a regime poisoned by the omnipresent lie, lies and self-deceptions are not only wrong, they are bound to fail tactically as well. You cannot outwit the prison guards by pretending to be their friend; you can only degrade yourself. To vote in a pseudo-election in order to avoid trouble (on the assumption that "it does not matter anyway") is a moral concession that you cannot make with impunity. Political blunders resulting from a wrong assessment of events are redeemable; moral degradation is not. This is certainly easier to state in general terms than to apply to particular cases, and on some occasions we may hesitate about the line dividing an admissible compromise from an inadmissible one; yet in important matters there is little room for doubt.

All the imprisoned K.O.R. members have now been released. They refused to sign the acceptance of the amnesty, saying that such a signature implies there were valid reasons for their imprisonment. They were released nevertheless, as were the Solidarity leaders (with the exception of Bogdan Lis, who was arrested only a few days before the amnesty and is apparently charged with high treason).

Otherwise, no significant political change has occurred in Poland. The rulers seem to hope that somehow a miracle will heal the Polish economy, but they continue to live in fear. They fear the political concessions that are a necessary condition of any economic recovery. Most likely, incapable of coping with the country's predicament, they will persist in an inconsistent and helpless policy, oscillating between unsuccessful threats and unsuccessful attempts to appease the society. The amnesty belongs, of course, to the second category. It marks the success of the resistance, but by no means does it exclude a new wave of brutalities. The government, after all, wants to appease both the Kremlin and the Poles, and it cannot do both.

No radical solution is in sight, but immobility is not likely either. Western leaders cannot prevent dangerous explosions from periodically occurring in Poland and in other parts of the Soviet empire as long as the source of the sickness—the artificial division of Europe—has not been removed.

LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI

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Sandinista corruption and violence breed bitter opposition.

NICARAGUA'S UNTOLD STORIES

BY ROBERT S. LEIKEN

THE 72-YEAR-OLD señora lives in a solid stone house constructed by the Sandinista government. Her son, German Pomares, was a founder of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (F.S.L.N.) who perished leading the final offensive against Somoza in 1979. Set off by a well-kept garden from the shacks of the cotton field workers of El Viejo, Mrs. Pomares's home appears comfortable. But inside, the mother of the nationally revered martyr sleeps on a cot covered with rags, and she hobbles through bare, unfurnished rooms. She lives on a pension equivalent to $10 a month. She has made four trips to the local hospital, but has yet to succeed in getting a doctor's appointment. Three times she has requested an audience with Comandante Tomas Borge, now the sole surviving founder of the F.S.L.N. Each time, her son's old comrade has refused to receive her.

For one who has sympathized with the Sandinistas, it is painful to look into the house they are building, but it is unwise not to. I spent ten days in Nicaragua in August, accompanied by my brother, a trade unionist from Boston. It was my sixth visit since the revolution, and my longest since 1981. I have testified in Congress against aid to the *contras* and have supported (and continue to support) negotiations to end the civil war in El Salvador. Yet each succeeding trip to Nicaragua drains my initial reservoir of sympathy for the Sandinistas. Last year I wrote in my introduction to a book treated by the press as the "Democratic alternative to the Kissinger Report" that the Sandinistas' "failure to preserve the revolutionary alliance with the middle class and small producers as well as sectarian political and cultural policies [had] polarized the country, led to disinvestment, falling productivity and wages, labor discontent, and an agrarian crisis." This visit convinced me that the situation is far worse than I had thought, and disabused me of some of the remaining myths about the Sandinista revolution.

Everywhere we went we confronted the disparity between these myths and the unpleasant truth. The Sandinistas blame Nicaragua's economic crisis on the *contra* war and U.S. economic sanctions. Yet the standard of living in Nicaragua was deteriorating well before the U.S.-backed *contras* turned to economic sabotage in the spring of 1983. A December 1981 internal staff memorandum of the International Monetary Fund found that real wages had fallen 71 percent since July 1979. They have continued to decline in succeeding years. And even with the U.S. "economic boycott," over 25 percent of Nicaragua's exports still go to the United States, not much less than under Somoza. Nicaragua can no longer sell sugar at subsidized prices to the United States, but what it has lost in this market it has sold to Iran at prices above those of the world market. The war and U.S. sanctions have compounded a mess created by the Sandinistas themselves.

Nicaraguans themselves do not seem to accept Sandinista claims that *Yanqui* aggression is responsible for the general scarcity of consumer goods. Peasants are obligated to sell their goods to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and contend that its prices are too low to enable them to make ends meet. A large portion of the peasantry is now producing only for its own consumption, and the resulting shortages have dramatically driven up prices. The marketplace, once the bustling center of Nicaraguan life, is now a daunting experience for buyers and sellers alike. As shoppers make the rounds looking for rice, beans, milk, toilet paper, soap, or light bulbs, the shopkeepers' constant reply is "*No hay*" (There isn't any). For anyone unable to afford the inflated prices or without the foreign exchange to shop at the new foreign currency stores, Eastern European-style queuing is now routine.

One of the most depressing aspects of our trip was to hear from so many that their lives are worse today than they were at the time of Somoza. Before the revolution Nicaraguans ate well by Central American standards. Thanks to the country's fertile soil and its small population, even poor Nicaraguans were accustomed to beef and chicken. Now consumer goods available to the masses in other Central American countries are no longer obtainable. Barefoot children are hardly uncommon in the region, but I had never seen so many completely naked. As we encountered them, their distended stomachs displaying the telltale signs of malnutrition, Nicaraguans would bitterly recall the government slogan, "*Los niños son los mimados de la revolucion*" ("Children are the spoiled ones of the revolution").

The shortage of basic necessities is also breeding pervasive corruption. When we asked a rural storekeeper why he was able to sell Coca-Cola while many restaurants in Managua were not, he said that he had obtained the soft

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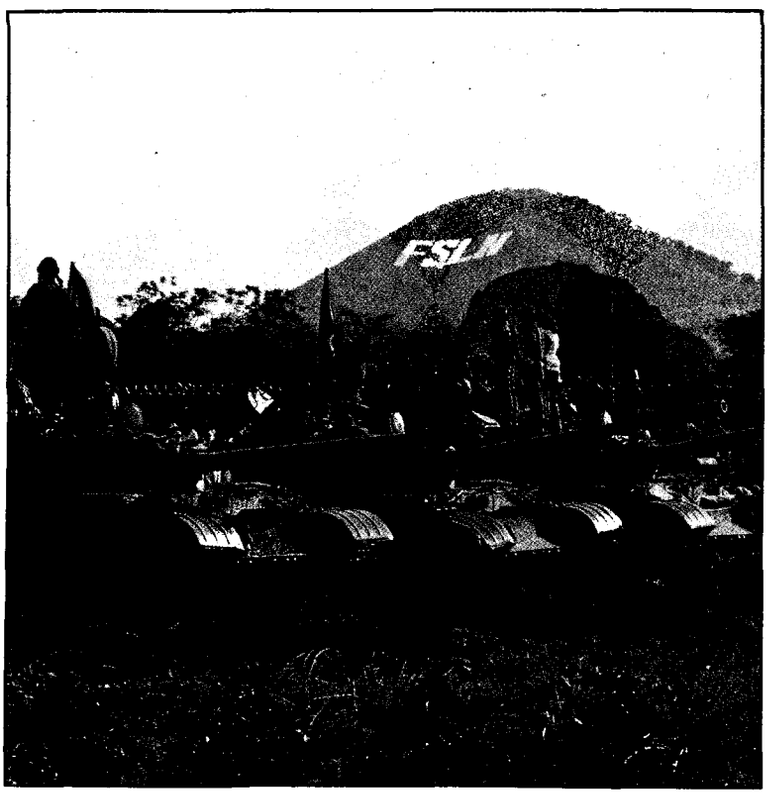
drink with a bribe. We later met Ramiro, a Coca-Cola deliveryman in León and a former member of the F.S.L.N., hitchhiking home from the city of Chinandega. He was returning from his five-hour weekly excursion after work to procure the three bottles of milk his children need. The milk cost him 150 cordobas, 30 percent of his weekly wages. (The official exchange rate is 28 cordobas to the dollar; the real, or black market, exchange rate is 250 to 1.) To get the money, he told us, he accepts bribes from some of his customers for extra cases of Coke. "This system is corrupting me against my will," he said.

Ramiro's desperate measures hardly merit censure. But others, especially high-ranking Sandinistas, are turning big profits from the scarcity. Members of a leather workers cooperative in Masaya told us that they are officially allotted 10,000 meters of leather a month; they receive between 5,000 and 7,000 meters. The cooperatives' Sandinista directors sell the remainder in Managua's Eastern Market and pocket the money. It is now a general practice for coordinators of the neighborhood Sandinista Defense Committees (C.D.S.) to sell part of the provisions allotted to them by the government on the private market. The people are then informed that provisions have run out.



APANA MILITARY BASE, JUNE 1984
PHOTO BY PAULO BOSIO/GAMMA-LIAISON

In the village of El Transito, two hours northwest of Managua, most of the people belonged to the C.D.S. at the outset of the revolution. Now there is but one member, the coordinator, formerly the village's leading Somocista. (The transformation of Somocistas into Sandinistas and of Sandinistas into oppositionists is very common. In every town we visited we were told that former Somoza officials are now running C.D.S.s.) The coordinator enriches himself by selling C.D.S. foodstuffs and supplies in the Eastern Market. As we passed his house, we were able to peer through the window and see him standing there in his dark glasses, isolated and reviled.

The life-styles of the new rich contrast vividly with that of the rest of the country, and with official rhetoric. A Sandinista *nomenklatura* has emerged. Party members shop at hard-currency stores, dine at luxury restaurants restricted to party officials, and vacation in the mansions of the Somoza dynasty, labeled "protocol houses." Vans pull up daily at government and party offices, to deliver ham, lobster, and other delicacies unavailable elsewhere. In a private state dining room, I ate a sumptuous meal with a comandante at a long table, attended by five servants. The image of the protruding stomachs of the "spoiled ones of the revolution" intruded while we consumed our lemon meringue pie.

Intellectuals and former officials claim that decadence is endemic in upper government and party echelons. A former Sandinista diplomat recounted tales of high jinks and extravagance by Sandinista officials on foreign junkets, and women state employees complained of the same sexual harassment and blackmail that is common elsewhere in Central America. The swinging Sandinista leadership cynically presents an image of revolutionary asceticism to the outside world while being addicted to the very vices that it routinely denounces in "degenerate bourgeois society."

The widespread corruption from the lowest to the highest levels of government makes it hard for Nicaraguans to accept the notion that their problems originate from abroad, or that they should endure further sacrifices "to confront the imperialist enemy." A jobless worker in the Indian town of Monimbo complained, "The C.D.S. insists that we unscrew the street lights to conserve energy in the fight against imperialism. People are falling in holes while the Sandinistas get rich on our misery. What are their sacrifices?"

Those Sandinistas who have refused to be corrupted recognize that their dreams have turned into a nightmare. One government official, a good friend, told me, "We have given birth to a freak. But we must keep him alive." Yet what is to be done when the freak becomes a menace to its people and neighbors? There is a general impression among those in the United States properly aghast at the C.I.A. mining of ports and U.S. support for the professional torturers among the *contras* that the Sandinistas are the victims, not the victimizers. Inside Nicaragua, however, the image is reversed.

The word Nicaraguans employ the most frequently to describe the Sandinista government is *engaño* (hoax or trick). In the city of Chinandega, we talked with transport workers from an opposition union who on their

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LABOR UNDER SIEGE

In the last several years, a number of union friends of mine have returned from Sandinista-sponsored tours of Nicaragua with enthusiastic reports of the achievements of the revolution. I visited Nicaragua myself this summer, meeting with members of both the official Sandinista labor federation and the independent unions. I didn't expect to discover a workers' paradise in this underdeveloped and crisis-ridden region, or to see workers running the factories. But I did hope to find signs of progress toward empowering the workers and peasants. Instead, I saw a labor movement battling a "Socialist" government which resists worker demands with tactics ranging from state-controlled unions to spurious arrests and violent goon squads.

In the 1970s labor was united against the Somoza regime, and workers expected that it would remain united to rebuild the country in the aftermath of Somoza's fall. But after assuming power, the Sandinistas sought a large measure of control over the workers by enrolling all Nicaraguan unions in the *Central Sandinista de Trabajadores* (C.S.T.). In 1980 the C.S.T. joined the World Federation of Trade Unions, headquartered in Prague. "The F.S.L.N. wanted to impose a central union, not build one," one opposition labor leader told me.

When centralizing efforts failed, the Sandinistas used state power to penalize unions unwilling to affiliate with them, to organize disruptive factions, and ultimately to jail opposition union leaders. I was told of death threats, beatings, police raids on union headquarters, military conscription of union dissidents, and blacklisting. Opposition leaders are now reluctant to use the recently restored right to strike for fear of being charged with "economic sabotage" and "abetting imperialism."

I talked with truckers from the port city of Corinto who had voted to disaffiliate their local from C.S.T. and to join the independent C.U.S., which is associated with the A.F.L.-C.I.O. through the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. Soon thereafter, the local's office was attacked by police and *turbas*. Later some had their drivers' licenses revoked, and a half-dozen union leaders were jailed. In another incident a leader of the other independent union, the C.T.N., said he had been beaten and his nose broken by *turbas* at the Managua airport in full view of military and civil police.

The Sandinistas have also alienated workers in their own unions, which has led to increasing numbers of wildcat strikes. Several years ago, when the Sandinistas nationalized the German Pomares sugar works, they ousted the independent union. Then, to ensure a docile new leadership, they stacked the vote by trucking in illiterate cane cutters. This summer workers at the refinery defied their leaders: they struck after the union allowed management to cut back worker access to the company store's superior goods and low prices.

While we were in Managua there was a wildcat sit-in at the government-owned Victoria Brewery. Truck drivers there earn 3,000 cordobas a month. Rents average 1,000 a month, and a pair of pants costs 1,000. One deliveryman told me, "We've had the same salaries for the last five years and now hunger has made us explode." The Victoria workers knew that to return to work without a contract can spell defeat. Forced to go back on the job, they effected a slowdown as a way to sustain their leverage.

The official F.S.L.N. newspaper, *Barricada*, carried a single article on the Victoria "labor dispute." It quoted Sandinista union leaders as saying that they offered "full support to the workers," but also said that they were urging them to return to work immediately. In contrast, *La Prensa* carried a front-page picture of 200 Coca-Cola drivers parading their trucks in solidarity with the Victoria workers. I was able to confirm *La Prensa*'s report that solidarity brigades were sent by the competing brewery Tona, La Milca fruit punch, Pepsi-Cola, and Standard Steel. Several of these unions also have announced impending strikes.

The dissident labor leaders I met were plainspoken, accustomed to dealing with concrete facts. The C.S.T. official I spoke with talked grandly about how the Sandinistas reorganized Nicaragua's tiny, undeveloped labor unions "by industrial branch." Yet he was at a loss to explain why they had abolished the Nicaraguan equivalent of the U.S. National Labor Relations Board (*Tribunales de Trabajo*).

He often contradicted what the workers had told me. The workers at the San Antonio sugar refinery said that they had launched a wildcat strike last February to uphold a wage agreement reached between workers and management. According to the workers, the labor minister, backed by the C.S.T. leadership, disallowed the labor contract because its wages exceeded government guidelines. The C.S.T. official claimed that the labor minister had rejected the contract because its wages were too *low*, and even credited the C.S.T. with leading the strike to raise wages. He went on to dismiss the Victoria wildcatters as "backward" and "disobedient." He saw his role not as a representative of the workers, but as their "intermediary" with the employer.

Numerous dissident union leaders described their situation as closely resembling that of the Solidarity movement. One leader, comparing Nicaragua to Poland, told me: "We are both small countries and have suffered many invasions. We both experience long lines and scarcity while many of our products are shipped off to the Soviet bloc. We are Catholic countries with close ties between the unions and the church. We live under regimes where citizens can be jailed at will. And both governments brand independent unions 'anti-Socialist agents of imperialism.' " Listening, I found myself wishing that some of my fellow union activists had come with me to Nicaragua. They would have been as shocked and disappointed at the repressiveness of this "government of workers and peasants" as I was.

SAM LEIKEN

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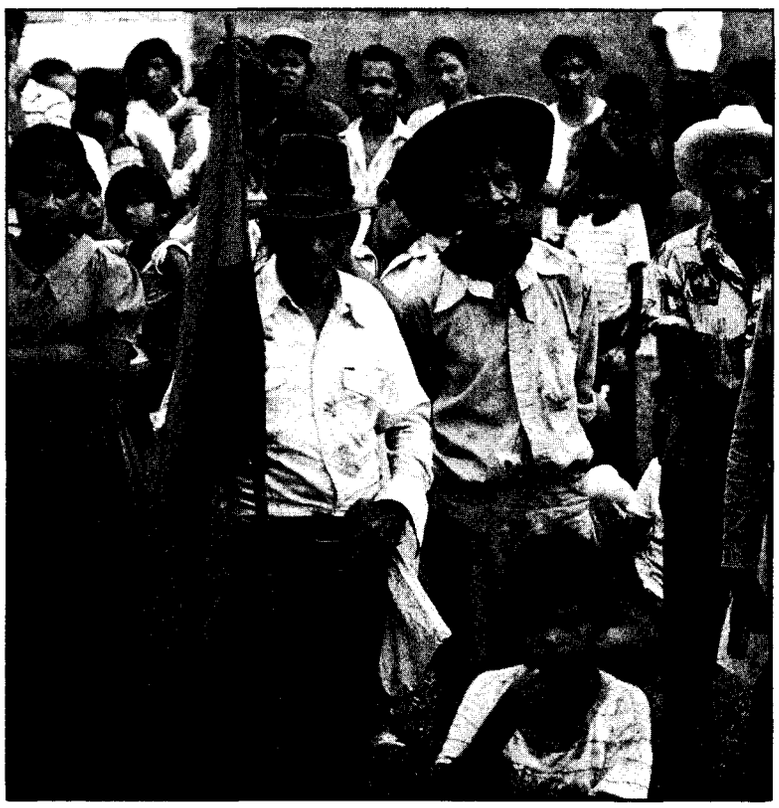
own time and with their union dues had painted road signs to make the city safer for driving. The Sandinista government took credit for the improvement. The national literacy campaign is one of the most vaunted achievements of the revolution, praised even by many of the government's critics. Yet two "graduates" of the literacy program in a peasant village told us they could not read their diplomas. We couldn't find one student from the campaign there or in the neighboring village who had learned to read. The campaign did somewhat better in the larger cities such as León, where, we were told, some had learned to read in follow-up courses. But most had forgotten the little they had learned, and at best could now only sign their name for election registration.

The most outrageous *engaño* occurred during Pope John Paul II's visit to Managua in March 1983. According to Sandinista accounts, the Pope's mass had been "spontaneously" interrupted by the crowd, offended by the Pope's failure to heed the request of mourning mothers who wanted him to pray for their sons killed in the battle against the *contras*. Two former government officials, who are still Sandinista supporters, told us a different story. They had been appalled at the interruptions made by cadre from the Sandinista women's organization, furnished with microphones and loudspeakers. After the Pope left, the crowd departed in disgust and the Sandinista leadership was left awkwardly standing on the platform. The two officials, depressed by the spectacle, retired to a bar located next to the offices of the F.S.L.N. radio station. They overheard a group of Sandinista radio employees at an adjoining table bragging about how they had played pre-recorded tapes of crowds chanting Sandinista slogans into the sound system.



SANDINISTA RALLY IN NUEVA SEGOVIA, FEBRUARY 1984.
PHOTO BY PAULO BOSIO/GAMMA-LIAISON

The Sandinista *engaño* has been most successful among the resident foreign press. Journalists familiar with the atrocities of the right-wing tyrannies of Central America wish to believe, quite understandably, that the Sandinistas present an alternative. In today's Nicaragua it is easy to confuse desire with reality. The resident press also frequently merges with the larger population of "internationalists," a term which embraces all those foreigners expressing solidarity with the Sandinistas, from Bulgarian and Cuban apparatchiks to idealistic North Americans and West Europeans. It is the general feeling among Nicaraguans that the foreign press in Managua strongly sympathizes with the government, and that it is dangerous to speak openly with them. Disaffected Sandinista intellectuals, friends of friends, who poured their hearts out to me in Managua were afraid to meet with reporters from the U.S. press. We spoke with a resident of Monimbo, where a spontaneous insurrection had ignited the revolution against Somoza in February 1978. We had spent an evening together a year before with a mutual friend, yet initially he was still distrustful. He told us that the revolution had produced "many advances for the people"; two hours later, he was saying, "Monimbo appears to be sleeping, the way it was during the time of Somoza, but the people are united. One day soon they will stand up again."

One of the most common means of sustaining the myth of popular support is the Sandinistas' use of the rationing system as a lever. In numerous villages and cities, we learned that ration cards are confiscated for nonattendance at Sandinista meetings. In Masaya we were told that before one of the "Face-the-People" meetings (in which comandantes meet with local residents) the ration cards of the members of cooperatives were collected; their return was made conditional on attendance. At one such meeting in Chinandega, Ortega branded talk of inflation "a counterrevolutionary plot." A pound of beans could still be purchased for five cordobas, he claimed. A man in the audience stood up and shouted, "Comandante, here's ten cordobas. Please get me a pound of beans." According to his neighbors, he was imprisoned later that day.

Although Nicaraguans still for the most part bow to government pressure, they do so sullenly and without conviction. We witnessed two Sandinista demonstrations, one in Masaya and the other in Chinandega, two historically pro-Sandinista cities. The Chinandega rally, held at 10 on a Wednesday morning, celebrated the fifth anniversary of the literacy campaign. It was attended entirely by students obligated to go by school authorities. As they marched through the streets chanting slogans distributed to them on small pieces of paper by their Sandinista in-

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structors, pedestrians did not so much as turn their heads. None of the presumably grateful, presumably literate, people came to greet the comandante sent from Managua.

In Masaya the demonstration did not even benefit from student participation. As we approached the gathering in the fading afternoon, a large group of students stood on the steps of the Catholic school. They had refused to join the demonstration because the Sandinistas had removed several of their Catholic teachers. The small group of demonstrators had glazed looks in their eyes as the last speeches wound down. I asked a *campesino* in attendance whether any of the comandantes had come. He answered, "I don't know. I slept through it."

THE NICARAGUAN populace has been saturated with Sandinista bombast which issues from radio, television, newspapers, local and national political meetings, and block committees, and which is propagated in the schools, the factories, and the cooperatives. The people resist in different ways: with the indifference and boredom we saw in Chinandega and Masaya; with a resurgence in religious feelings which has filled churches and Catholic schools; with suspiciousness and bitter humor.

Jokes and wisecracks against the Sandinistas are proliferating. The two pro-Sandinista newspapers, *Barricada* and *Nuevo Diaro*, are referred to as *Burricada* (as in bore) and *Nuevo Diablo*. The F.S.L.N. is "the Somocista National Liberation Front." "Why do people prefer *Tona* [one of the two Nicaraguan beers]? Because the other, *La Victoria*, is bitter." Suspicions of the government are so deep that families of the war dead no longer believe that the government coffins shipped back from the front contain the bodies of their sons. (The coffins are sealed as a matter of policy.) People believe, improbably, that the coffins hold rocks or banana tree trunks. In Monimbo we were told that when a family and friends tried to open a coffin with a hammer and chisel, they were carried off by the police.

Nor is popular discontent restricted to these forms of passive resistance. Sympathy with the *contras* is becoming more open and more pervasive. I was stunned to hear peasants refer to the *contras* as "*Los Muchachos*," the boys—the admiring term used to describe the Sandinistas when they were battling the National Guard. It was apparent that many Nicaraguans are listening to the "Fifteenth of September," the *contra* radio station. It must be noted, however, that the *contras* do not operate in the areas we visited, and sympathy toward them may well be proportionate to absence of direct contact.

Draft resistance has become a mass movement in Nicaragua. The government passed legislation last September under which Nicaraguan men between the ages of 16 and 40 can be drafted for two years. When we were in Nicaragua, four hundred women gathered outside the draft board in La Paz Centro, a trading town thirty-five miles northwest of Managua, to protest forced recruitment of their sons. The demonstration was the latest in a string of anti-draft demonstrations in cities and towns throughout Nicaragua. *New York Times* correspondent Stephen Kinzer, one of the few resident reporters to sniff out the *engaño* of Sandinista policies, reported on June 26 that "draft evasion is widespread," and found that high school attendance in six major provincial capitals had declined by as much as 40 percent. A student in León said that his high school class of forty-five had fallen to fourteen during the past year. Honduran researchers say Nicaraguan draft evaders pay 25,000 cordobas to be transported across the border, part of the money going to Nicaraguan Army officials in bribes. The demand is so great that border smugglers are now requiring groups no smaller than five. Draft resistance strikes a powerful blow at the myth of widespread popular support for the government. Young people have historically been the mainstay of Sandinista support.

PERHAPS THE most illuminating political event in the five years of Sandinista rule was a rally held for opposiston presidential candidate Arturo Cruz in Chinandega on August 5. On that Sunday morning, Sandinista chicanery, censored domestic and lackadaisical international press coverage, and the growing vigor of the opposition converged.

Chinandega, a city of approximately 60,000, was historically the heart of Sandinista organizing efforts and support. These efforts radiated out to the surrounding cotton and sugar fields, to the country's two largest sugar refineries nearby, to the stevedores at Corinto, Nicaragua's largest port, and down to León, another center of anti-Somoza resistance. One would have expected that here the opposition would be weakest, the government strongest.

The Chinandega demonstration was the last series of six held in support of Cruz. Each rally had been larger than the last. The organizers were denied access to Sandinista-controlled TV stations. They were able to place an ad on the one local non-Sandinista radio station, but they relied chiefly on two vehicles with loudspeakers, and on word-of-mouth. Two days before the rally three "angels," as members of the state security are commonly known, called on the organizers of the demonstration and accused them of being C.I.A. agents. The *turbas divinas*, "divine mobs" of Sandinista supporters, circled their houses at night beating sticks against cans and chanting until the small hours of the morning. (Somoza's version of the *turbas*—the *Nicolasa*—used to employ the very same method against the opposition.) Meanwhile, Sandinista newspapers and television branded the opposition as consisting of *contras* and agents of American imperialism, and announced that further "aggressions" by them would not be permitted. Local authorities implied that the demonstration would be declared illegal. The day before the rally, Daniel Ortega, the head of the Sandinista government and the Sandinista presidential candidate, spoke to two hundred youths in El Viejo, a village three miles away. El Viejo's residents later claimed that the youths had been incited against the demonstration's leaders.

Fearing an attack by the *turbas*, organizers did not put up the banners or placards until early on the morning of

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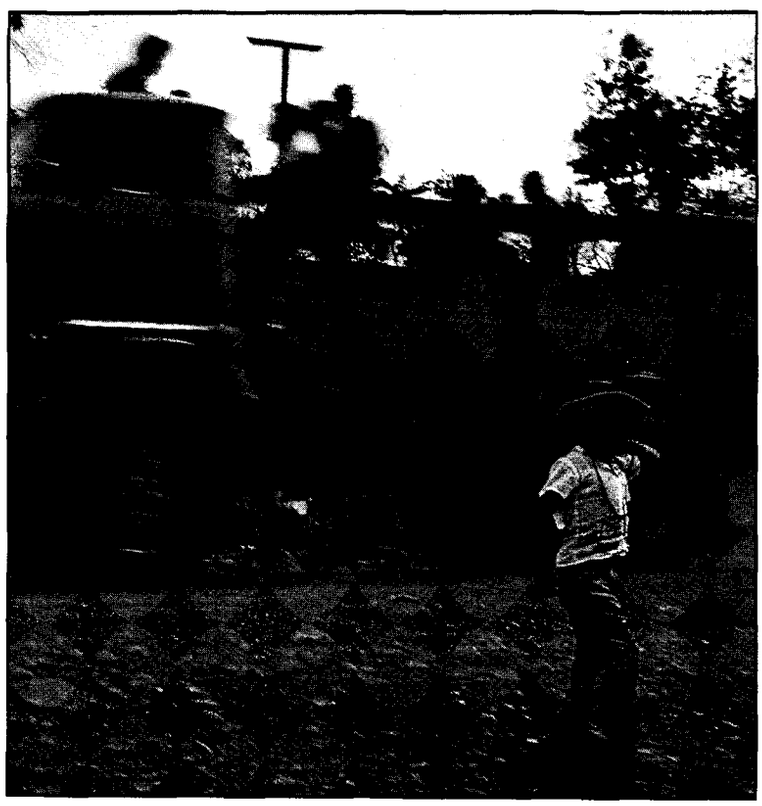
the demonstration. But as they were working, fifty *turbas* burst into the soccer field, tearing down the banners and dispersing the organizers. They returned later during the day to try to repair the damage.

We spoke with two organizers—middle-class, professional women who had belonged to the F.S.L.N. before the revolution. (According to one, "the F.S.L.N. says that the opposition is Somocista. But most of the old Somocistas are working with the government. The opposition has remained the same. It is the F.S.L.N. that has changed.") They told us that after the *turbas*' night-time serenading, they went to complain to the offices of the party representative, the chief of police, and the chief of state security, and to the Sandinistas. They were assured that the *turbas* would be controlled and that the demonstration would not be obstructed. After the early-morning attack, the two women went to the house of the local party leader. The door was open, and they entered. In the next room they heard the *turbas* informing him of the success of their mission.



STREET SCENE, PHOTO BY JAMES HAMILTON

There is no question that many who wished to go to the Cruz rally stayed at home. On the day of the rally, local authorities impeded traffic from outlying areas into Chinandega. As Cruz marched through the city, many people opened their doors, gave him the "V" for victory sign, and then ducked back into their homes to avoid the ever-present eyes of the C.D.S. One woman said she did not go to the demonstration because she lived too close to the Sandinista youth office. She told of others who received threatening phone calls. Two weeks after the demonstration, a gas station attendant in Managua told us he had gone to the rally and that three friends who had accompanied him were in jail.

As might be expected, estimates of the turnout vary. Opposition figures soared as high as 20,000; local newsmen said 7,000. Given Sandinista efforts to reduce attendance, even 7,000 seems an impressive number, especially since three months before, the F.S.L.N. only managed to get 2,500 to Chinandega for the country's principal May Day rally. NBC taped the entire Cruz demonstration. Should this tape ever be shown publicly, experts will be able to make an accurate judgment about the number of demonstrators. When I viewed the tape it was evident that these thousands of demonstrators were hardly "bourgeoisie," as the Sandinistas claimed. They were overwhelmingly workers, peasants, and young people. I learned later that workers had hired their own trucks to come from the San Antonio Refinery and from the port of Corinto. They chanted slogans like *"El frente y Somoza son la misma cosa."* ("The Sandinistas and Somoza are the same thing.")

When Cruz began to speak, dozens of *turbas* armed with sticks, stones, and machetes surrounded the field. They came in on what appeared to be army trucks chanting, "Power to the people." They proceeded to break the windows and puncture the tires of demonstrators' cars. The police seemed to make no serious effort to restrain them. When the *turbas* attacked the demonstrators themselves, opposition youths dispersed, only to return wielding their own sticks and stones. Outnumbered, the *turbas* were routed.

The almost complete absence of foreign and domestic press coverage enabled Sandinista officials to characterize the demonstration their own way. We encountered a Sandinista official drunk at midday on the streets of El Viejo. He told us that the demonstration had taken place at the private home of a bourgeoisie and was attended only by a handful of plutocrats. In Managua, the Sandinistas told us that there had been several hundred demonstrators. The following day the Nicaraguan press carried no mention of the events except for one photograph in the official newspaper *Barricada* which purported to show the *turbas* attacked by "fascist" demonstrators. *La Prensa* had devoted several articles and photographs to the demonstration and the clashes, but these were all censored, and the paper did not appear. This was the very day that Daniel Ortega had announced the lifting of press censorship.

The demonstrations for Cruz's candidacy tested the popular mood and the prospects for "the first free elections in Nicaragua," as the Sandinistas' slogan puts it. Among the conditions that Cruz and his supporters have laid down as indispensable for participation are guarantees of freedom of movement, assembly, and equal access to the press and television; sufficient time to campaign;

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international observers; and, most importantly, guarantees that if he won the election he would be allowed to take office. What happened at Chinandega strongly suggests that neither a genuine election nor a genuine campaign can take place.

Chinandega also exposed the Sandinistas' electoral stratagem. Their decision to hold elections in November was based on a rudimentary political calculation. They judged that the external legitimacy provided by elections would more than compensate for their internal cost. They knew that power does not often change hands in Central America through elections. Somoza's elections had proven that, and the Sandinistas are in a far better position to control elections than Somoza ever was.

Yet their calculations were wrong on two counts. First, they failed to account for the Nicaraguan people. High-level Sandinista officials to whom I have spoken seem to live, along with their international supporters, in a dream world. They deem that the "anti-imperialist sentiments" of the Nicaraguan people allow them to bear any sacrifice even when their "anti-imperialist" leaders bear none. They receive favorable reports from lower-level cadre whose jobs depends on the perception of success. The Sandinistas knew that after five years of enforced political paralysis, the opposition was poorly organized, divided, and amateurish. The spontaneous popular reception for Cruz took them by surprise. Second, they failed to recognize the degree to which they have alienated progressive opinion in Latin America and Western Europe. Cruz's recent highly successful trip to Costa Rica, Venezuela, and Colombia, and his support from European Social Democrats like Spanish Socialist Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, has confounded the F.S.L.N.'s electoral plans.

THUS THE Sandinistas find themselves in a quandary. Will they back down and permit Cruz to run under reasonable conditions, or will they go ahead with a discredited election? Thus far at least, the Sandinistas seem unwilling to pay the price of submitting their rule to a popular test. One Sandinista official, whom I have always considered a moderate, told me privately that they would prefer a U.S. intervention because it would "vastly accelerate the Latin American revolution against U.S. imperialism." He told me that the Nicaraguan Army would immediately invade Honduras and Costa Rica and be greeted as "liberators" by the people.

One can only hope that cooler Sandinista heads will prevail. Authentic elections may be the last chance to avert full-scale civil war. If democratic channels cannot be opened, the civilian opposition will be forced to link up with the armed opposition—which is exactly what happened in the 1970s in El Salvador after fraudulent elections. The United States, which has a monstrous record in Nicaragua, can do something to help. What is needed now most urgently is a bipartisan effort in support of authentic elections in Nicaragua.

As we pulled out of Managua in the fading light of a Sunday afternoon, we found ourselves directly behind an army convoy made up of about twenty vehicles. But unlike the army convoys I have seen in El Salvador, Honduras, and elsewhere, it would not permit traffic to pass. A large vehicle with a blinking light occupied the left lane, forcing vehicles coming toward us off the road. A soldier with a machine gun was poised on the rear truck. It took us four hours to cover the fifty miles to León. It was a grueling microcosm of Nicaragua today: the Sandinistas in the "vanguard" preventing the normal flow of traffic, whether out of real fear, paranoia, or bullying. Behind them the rest of the population followed, inconvenienced, irritated, and enduring another pointless "sacrifice" for the Sandinistas' militarism. Our inconvenience was only four hours: the Nicaraguan people experience this twenty-four hours a day. Their patience has worn thin.

Free elections to prevent a civil war.

THE CRUZ ALTERNATIVE

BY JOSHUA MURAVCHIK

THE LAST best hope for a peaceful and humane resolution to Nicaragua's recent agonies may be slipping away. The hope arises from the government's plan to hold national elections on November 4 and the unprecedented cooperation, in response to that plan, that has been achieved among various elements of the opposition.

Three centrist political parties, two labor federations, and the organization representing businessmen and professionals banded together to form the Nicaraguan Democratic Coordinator, known as the "Coordinadora." It chose Arturo Cruz as its presidential candidate, and announced it would not participate in the elections unless the government consented to a "national dialogue" about the terms of the elections and their aftermath.

The Sandinista government originally refused this demand, citing one of the Coordinadora's conditions for the talks: that representatives of the anti-Sandinista guerrillas also be included. But in August that demand was dropped. Both principal rebel groups—the Frente Democratico Nicaragüense (F.D.N.), and the Alianza Revolucionario Democrático (ARDE) have pledged to lay down their arms if an agreement is reached through the dialogue.

Shorn of the demand for including the rebels in the national dialogue, the nine-point program of the Coordinadora is so manifestly reasonable that the Sandinista gov-

Joshua Muravchik is completing a book on the Carter Administration and human rights policy.

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ernment has had trouble justifying its resistance. But thus far it has shown no signs of moving toward an agreement; indeed, it has underscored its tough stance by depriving the three parties that belong to the Coordinadora of their legal standing as political parties.

But the opposition believes that the last word is yet to be heard, and Cruz and his colleagues are hoping to bring international pressure to bear on the Sandinistas. They recently visited five other Latin American countries and were received by the President of each. They are also looking for support from the United States and from Europe. Their immediate demand is for a postponement of the elections so that fair terms can be negotiated.

The Coordinadora program rests on the simple premise that there are elections and there are "elections." It embodies two goals. The first is to win assurances that the elections themselves will be fair and free. The second, more far-reaching, goal is summed-up by Cruz in the phrase, "respect for the results of the election."

To secure the first, Cruz and his colleagues are calling for international oversight of the elections by either the O.A.S. or the Contadora group, or by representatives of the Socialist International or other Latin American states agreeable to both the opposition and the Sandinistas. They have requested that all polling places be organized so that citizens do not have to cast their ballots, as Cruz puts it, "under the eyes and ears of the so-called 'Committees for the Defense of the Revolution,' " the Sandinistas' internal surveillance network. In addition, the Coordinadora seeks guarantees of freedom of expression, information, and movement; an end to censorship of the press, freedom of assembly; and equal access to the airwaves.

The Coordinadora's second set of conditions focuses on what will follow the elections and poses perhaps an even more important test of the Sandinistas' willingness to share power with the Nicaraguan people. "Basically," says Cruz, "it's the separation of party and state. What if the opposition wins the elections? We have to be sure that we have the capacity to govern. If you have the army as it is now, an instrument of the Sandinistas, how can you expect that?" Cruz is referring to the fact that Nicaragua's overgrown army is officially the army of the Sandinista Party. If Cruz is elected President, will the army then belong to the opposition? An analogous situation applies in other crucial institutions such as the militia, the police, and television.

IN A FAIR election, the Sandinistas might find Cruz a formidable adversary. Against him they would have difficulty sustaining the argument that opposition to them is tantamount to "counterrevolution" and the posthumous restoration of *Somocismo*. Cruz himself served two prison terms under the Somozas, and was one of a group of prominent citizens, called "The Twelve," whose public alliance with the Sandinistas was crucial to the overthrow of Somoza. He served as head of the Central Bank during the early months of the revolutionary government. After Alfonso Robelo and Violeta Chamorro, the two original non-Sandinista members of the revolutionary junta, resigned from it in protest, Cruz accepted a seat on it in their place, thereby demonstrating his willingness to walk the extra mile with the Sandinistas. That was something he demonstrated a second time by agreeing to come to Washington as ambassador. For most of a year he labored to secure U.S. acceptance of the revolution even while his own differences with the Sandinista government were widening.

The Coordinadora's platform aims not at repealing the revolution, but at fulfilling its original promises. Cruz says: "We want the revolution to really go to the three parameters on which it is predicated—nonalignment, mixed economy, and pluralism."

The touchstone of Cruz's policy of nonalignment would be a strong focus on relations with the rest of Central America. He twits the Sandinistas for pursuing an ideological foreign policy that has engaged Nicaragua in unlikely causes ("It was not until the Sandinistas came to power that we heard of the Frente Polisario in North Africa"), and that has left it as entangled as ever in its relations with the United States. He would "demilitarize Nicaragua completely," leaving only a police force. "For the protection of the country against aggression, we would do as the Costa Ricans do, invoke the Rio Treaty of collective security."

THE Coordinadora's case is a good one, and it deserves more attention from North Americans than it has gotten. Not only does it offer a basis for bringing peace to Nicaragua, it also can be the basis for a cease-fire in the battle within the United States over policy toward Nicaragua. Indeed, one reason for the lack of attention to the Coordinadora's struggle may be that elections are approaching in North America too, and all political factions here are looking to sharpen their differences with their opponents. The Coordinadora's stance offers neither hawks nor doves much that they can disagree with or disagree about.

But the United States now has a moment of opportunity in Nicaragua, and it will not wait for the U.S. elections to pass. Those who have been advocating a more conciliatory U.S. policy toward Nicaragua ought to wield the stick, pressing the Sandinistas to meet the demands of the Coordinadora. Those who have supported aid to the *contra* rebels ought to proffer the carrot—an end to that support if the Sandinistas agree to genuine dialogue resulting in free elections.

The Sandinistas now have power, the kind that grows out of the barrel of a gun. In the end, they may decline to put it at risk. But they can't have it both ways. An election without the participation of the Coordinadora would be an empty exercise conferring no legitimacy on its predictable victors. This is a message that the Sandinistas ought to be hearing over and again from those in Latin America, Western Europe, and the United States, of whatever political stripe, who hope for a peaceful resolution to Nicaragua's turmoils. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

The Right-Handed Man

"All [Alain] Tanner's films follow a similar scenario," writes Dennis Nastav in the encyclopedia I reviewed two weeks ago. "Individuals or a group become alienated from society; rejecting it, they try to forge a new society answerable to themselves alone, only to be defeated by the relentless pressures of society's institutions, whose commerce they never cease to require." It's true: this theme, which has been present in literature and drama since the dawn of romanticism, was at the heart of Tanner's best work, *La Salamandre*, and of his worst, *Messidor*, and of the four others qualitatively in between. It continues in his new film, *In the White City*, but with a difference.

In the White City
(Gray City Inc.)

The scripts of most of his previous films were co-written with John Berger, the English Marxist novelist and art critic; with or without Berger, all Tanner's work has leaned on facile post-1968 radical assumptions—not a reasoned politics but a set of chic, clubby, anti-status-quo attitudes. In *La Salamandre*, they seemed exactly what the people in that fine work would believe; in *Messidor*, they seemed lame justifications for a slovenly work. Now, without Berger and completely without radical implication, Tanner pushes on with the same theme.

Tanner seems to reflect a new influence—Peter Handke's *The Left-Handed Woman*. The relationship is suggested early not only because Handke dealt there with Tanner's recurrent theme but because Bruno Ganz, who was the husband in Handke's film, plays Tanner's protagonist. It's hardly credible that Tanner doesn't know Handke's film, though he can't be accused of borrowing since he dealt with the theme before Handke did. Still, he now treats it in something of a Handke mode, and *In the White City* can be seen more clearly if posed against *The Left-Handed Woman*.

Here Ganz is an engineer on a merchant ship that calls at Lisbon. (I infer that he is German Swiss; Tanner himself is French Swiss.) He jumps ship. Almost by design but obviously by chance, he proceeds to a hotel in a poor quarter and engages a room. He stays on. He corresponds with his wife—in Switzerland, apparently. In time the hotel's barmaid-chambermaid and he become lovers, then fall in love. He does absolutely nothing but eat and drink, make love, wander about, play billiards. He is robbed of all his money, but he is unworried. He sells his watch and continues to live exactly as before. He is hurt in a fight and hospitalized; the maid, who thinks he has deserted her, leaves for a job in France. He tries to learn her address but fails. He sells his radio and small movie camera for fare, then takes a train—presumably to return to his wife.

If that story seems bland, in proof it is much too contrived for Tanner's purpose. Handke told of a woman who simply asks her husband to leave her alone, with their child, and who lives that way for a time—not until she sees the light or finds herself or until something extrinsic happens to rupture her environment, simply until she is able to return to living as before. What keeps Handke's film vital—fundamentally, aside from the acting and other elements—is Handke's complete conviction about what he is doing, plus his courage to resist any temptation to make his film conventionally interesting. Tanner shares the conviction, but he lacks Handke's courage. He puts in plotty, grabby material: an explicit sex scene; the theft of Ganz's wallet; Ganz's later trailing of the thief; a knife fight.

These elements not only intrude on the transfiguration of time and impulse that Tanner is after, they force us to ask finicky questions about Ganz's character. If he is an experienced seaman, let alone a responsible adult, why would he go to a billiard parlor with his wallet plainly sticking out of his back pocket? Why would he search for the thief alone? Did he expect confession and restoration? After he sees the knife in the other man's hand, why does he close with him? All these actions might argue a death wish except that such a wish is elsewhere contradicted.

So we keep asking psychological-dossier questions that are inimical to the film's distilling intent. We never ask such questions about Handke's woman; her acts of living, her commonplace motions of daily existence, are all we need because they imply—through the intensity with which they are regarded—the inner uncertainties that have forced her to concentrate on trivia and on nullity. When, after three months, she resumes her previous life, it is for no neatly specified reason. In Tanner's film, Ganz returns to his wife because he has lost the other girl.

This marks another strong difference between the two films. *The Left-Handed Woman* is not in any demonstrable way a feminist film: it's not about a woman

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Another Country. Exceptional acting, dialogue, and visual acuity almost compensate for a too simple explanation of the Burgess-McLean syndrome. (Reviewed 7/9/84)

Bizet's Carmen. This *Carmen* is the opera, splendidly filmed except for the leading men's acting. Fine singing, fluent direction, gorgeous pictures—excitement almost all the way. (9/17&24/84)

The Bostonians. Pallid Henry James, but most of the cast are good and Vanessa Redgrave (as Olive) is superb. Thomas Eakins, apparently, designed and shot it. (8/6/84)

The Muppets Take Manhattan. While waiting for a better Muppet picture, this one certainly passes the time. They're trying to get their college show done on Broadway. . . . Anyway, it's the Muppets. (8/13&20/84)

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taking a breather from the toils of married life and the demands of a husband. It could as easily be about a man. But *In the White City* is chock full of male ego. Ganz's wife is waiting patiently for him at home, eager to welcome him whenever he chooses to return; he quite deliberately lords it over her not only by writing her about his Lisbon affair but by including physical detail; he goes home only when he no longer has a lover in Lisbon. The story seems to rest more on male disposition and whim than on deep surfeit of social clamors.

Bothersome, too, is the small moving-picture camera that Ganz carries. He photographs the places that he visits and also himself (holding the camera at arm's length), then he sends the reels home to his wife as news notes. In the very last scene on the train, after he has sold the camera to pay the fare, he sits opposite a lovely girl; and he sees her face as it would appear in one of his own camera shots. This closing moment and the other bits of his own film throughout seem too heavy indications that this man must fragment the world and store it away in manageable bits before he can deal with it.

Yet, flaws and all, Tanner still has some power as an artist. I've arbitrarily juxtaposed him with Handke because his film is so daring that the best way to appreciate it is against a work of similar intent. Tanner is much inferior to Handke, he fiddles and strains, but he doesn't fake. *In the White City* goes on too long—three times before the end, I thought it was over—but it's not blatantly self-indulgent: Tanner is struggling to find a finish that will retroactively, electrically, fuse his whole film into an organism. He doesn't succeed: but it's not because of vanity, it's simply non-success. All through the picture there are signets of sincerity, like one especially lovely "held" moment in which two floor-length red window-drapes move idly in a breeze like inanimate counterparts of Ganz's spirit. And Tanner's continuing devotion to one central theme is, as in the Antonioni of the great days, as in almost all of Beckett's playwriting career, a testament of authenticity, not sterility.

Like Tanner, Bruno Ganz has lived in figurative white cities before, and he moves through this one with the amusement of a man who sees exactly how ridiculous he would be under the eye of heaven if he believed in heaven. As the barmaid, Teresa Madruga is perfect. She combines a working-class pride and fire that are drawn to his intellectual self-doubt, and yet she is wary of him. One of the subtlest touches comes when she leaves for France because Ganz has apparently gone off, without even saying goodbye. She is hurt, but we sense that she nonetheless feels she has been rescued.

PERUVIAN MASTER

The War of the End of the World
by Mario Vargas Llosa translated by Helen R. Lane

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 568 pp., $18.95)

Peru's most important living novelist, Mario Vargas Llosa, has for many years played a significant part in his country's politics. In this respect he is like many writers of the South and unlike the great majority of his northern colleagues. He may well be the only novelist, for example, to have been offered the post of Prime Minister, and to have turned it down; at any rate, the number of such writers must be very small. He remains one of the most influential supporters of Peru's President, Belaunde Terry. For backing Belaunde, Vargas Llosa has come in for a certain amount of criticism, from groups and writers of the left, for instance, who have objected to his critique of the *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) guerrillas in the hills. He has in turn argued that while the world seems almost to expect the history of South America to be wholly composed of violent revolutions and repressive dictatorships, his own inclination is toward a less glamorous method of regulating human affairs—that is, some locally adapted variant of the old, flawed, battered idea of democracy, perhaps

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still the only idea by which the deadly cycle of coup and countercoup can be broken. It is undeniably a persuasive point of view.

In his loudly acclaimed novel *The War of the End of the World*, which has arrived in English in a fine, fluent translation by Helen R. Lane, Vargas Llosa sets down with appalling and ferocious clarity his vision of the tragic consequences for ordinary people of millenarianism of whatever kind. He has written before, in his novel *Captain Pantoja and the Special Service*, about the emergence in remote rural parts of an ascetic figure who becomes a focus of resistance to a militaristic state. That was primarily a comic novel, however, whereas the new book is as dark as spilled blood. And while it is most impressively got up as a historical novel—based, we are told, on a "real" episode in Brazilian history—its value as a text is entirely contemporary. In an age such as ours, plagued by bloodthirsty armies and equally violent gods, an account of a fight to the finish between God and Mammon could be nothing else, even though Vargas has placed his war in one of the most remote corners—the "ends"—of the world, that is, in the northeastern part of Brazil in the nineteenth century. His imaginary Messiah, the Counselor, prefigures (to offer just one recent example) the Sikh leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, shot dead by the Indian Army in Amritsar's famous Golden Temple, itself a real-life version of Vargas's fictive Christian Canudos.

THE Counselor—Antônio Conselheiro—is a thin, awe-inspiring holy man who wanders the backlands of the province of Bahia in the last decade or so of the nineteenth century, advising the peons of their spiritual obligations in clear and comprehensible language, encouraging them to help him repair the region's many dilapidated and priestless churches, slowly gathering about himself an inner circle or band of apostles, and warning eloquently of the fearsome apocalypse that is to arrive with the millennium:

> In 1900 the sources of light would be extinguished and the stars would rain down. But, before that, extraordinary things would happen. . . . In 1896. . . the sea would turn into the backlands and the backlands into the sea. . . . In 1898 hats would increase in size and heads grow smaller, and in 1899 the rivers would turn red and a new planet would circle through space. It was necessary, therefore, to be prepared.

The point of no return arrives, however, before any of these apparitions have had an opportunity to manifest themselves. Bahia, in which slavery has not been abolished for very long and which remains in the two-fisted grip of autocratic feudal landowners and in extreme ignorance of the outside world, begins to hear about ominous developments. A Republic has been proclaimed; it intends to make a census, and worse, to levy taxes. These are the last straws for the people of the backlands. Why would the Republic want everyone counted and described, except to re-impose slavery? And, again, "animal instinct, common sense and centuries of experience made the townspeople realize immediately . . . that the tax collectors would be greedier than the vultures and the bandits." The Counselor gives expression to their worst fears. He announces that "the Antichrist was abroad in the world; his name was Republic." Then he withdraws, with all who wish to follow him, to the fastness of Canudos, part of the lands of the Baron de Canabrava, the largest of the feudal landlords and chief of the Bahian Autonomist Party—which, ironically, is just as hostile to the new Republic, though for wholly profane reasons of self-interest.

In Canudos the Counselor sets about the construction and fortification of "Belo Monte," a city and a church, a new Jerusalem against which the Antichrist must hurl his armies. There will be four fires, the Counselor tells his flock (which numbers, at its peak, more than thirty thousand souls). He will quench three and permit the fourth to consume them. So the four battles of the war of Canudos are prophesied in advance. What follows has the slow, somber inevitability of a Greek tragedy—though one played out in a jungle. Our knowledge of the end serves only to increase our pain.

VARGAS LLOSA'S writing has been working up to this book throughout his remarkable career; the prose has been getting simpler, the forms clearer. It is a long way from the structural complexities and the sometimes willful-seeming obscurity of his very striking early novels, *The Time of the Hero* and *The Green House*, via the comic accessibility, even zaniness, of *Captain Pantoja* and *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter*, to the much more solid, crafted, traditional virtues of the present novel. It must not be supposed, though, that this represents some kind of descent into populism. Rather, Vargas Llosa would appear to have been moving, gradually, from one form of complexity toward another. Or, to be precise, from complexity of form to complexity of ideas. *The War of the End of the World* does certainly offer many of the conventional satisfactions of the long, meticulous, historical novel—the re-creation of a lost world; leisurely, well-paced exposition; a sense of elbowroom, and of being in safe hands. But it also gives us a fictional universe bursting with intellectual argument, one whose inhabitants are perfectly willing and able to dispute matters both political and spiritual at great length and with considerable verve.

BUT the greatest qualities of this excellent novel are, I believe, neither its inexorable Greek progress toward the slaughter of the innocents with which it climaxes, nor its intellectual rigor. They are, rather, its refusal ever to abandon the human dimension in a story that could so easily have become grandiose; also a sense of ambiguity, which enables Vargas Llosa to keep his characters three-dimensional, and not merely the representatives of Good, or Evil, or some such abstraction; and finally, a profound awareness of the tragic irony that makes tens of thousands of ordinary women and men die fighting against the Republic that was created, in theory, precisely to serve them, and to protect them against the rapacity of their former feudal overlords.

The human scale is retained by allowing much of the story to be seen from the point of view of a group of characters centered on the peasant woman Jurema. She is the wife of the tracker Rufino, feudal bondsman of the Baron de Canabrava, and when she is raped by the naïf revolutionary Galileo Gall and taken off with him by a circus troupe, Rufino is obliged by the laws of honor to follow Galileo and kill him. When the two men have in fact done each other in, Jurema arrives at Canudos in the company of a Dwarf, the teller of fairy tales who is the sole survivor of the circus troupe; and of a character known only as "the nearsighted journalist," whose growth from childlike innocence to bruised maturity is at the emotional heart of the novel.

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Jurema is thus accompanied by representatives of both oral and written literature, and neither is able to cope with Canudos. Nobody much wants to pay for the Dwarf's stories; and the journalist breaks his glasses and sees the great events as a series of shadows, or eventually of shards, because he pieces together a monocle from the broken lenses. An eyewitness deprived of his eyes is a sad image, and the journalist is indeed a moving figure. It is Jurema who keeps the men of words alive, partly because one of the chiefs of Canudos, the ex-bandit Pajeù, falls in love with her. Her place in the narrative is somewhat artificially centralized, it's true; toward the end, the Baron de Canabrava, hearing the tale of the fall of Canudos from the journalist, is amazed to learn that the fellow has married Rufino's wife (the two are among the handful of survivors of the massacre):

> All these happenstances, coincidences, fortuitous encounters. . . . [The Baron] suddenly had the absurd feeling that the former maidservant of Calumbí was the only woman in the *sertao*, a female under whose fateful spell all the men with any sort of connection to Canudos unconsciously fell sooner or later.

It is a bit like that; but perhaps just because Jurema is such an unlikely, even banal center, the artifice does not jar too badly. And the benefits to the novel, for the purpose of keeping our eyes on individual lives, are considerable.

AS TO ambiguity: it was a fine stroke to make the Counselor's innermost disciples so badly flawed in so many ways. Some of them—scar-faced Pajeù, Pedrao, Abbot Joao—are former bandits and mass murderers; even holy Maria Quadrado, "Mother of Men," turns out to be none other than the once-notorious Filicide of Salvador; and the closest disciple of all, the St. Peter of this band, known as the Little Blessed One, finally (and like Peter) betrays his Christ, by breaking the solemn oath he himself made everyone take never to reveal the dead Counselor's burial place. These flaws do more than make credible characters of the apostles. They make the important point that the leaders of this bizarre uprising are in no way "better" than their followers; and by being in many ways "worse," they do not become the repositories of morality. That rôle is left to the mass of the faithful as a whole.

One ambiguity is less pleasing. The Baron de Canabrava's wife Estela goes mad when the rebels burn her beloved home Calumbí, and for a while the falling feudalists seem almost sympathetic figures. Then the Baron quite forfeits the reader's sympathy—and to be honest, in the case of this reader, so, nearly, does the Baron's creator—when he rapes his wife's servant as a way of being close to dear Estela again. "I always wanted to share her with you, my darling," he "stammers," and mad Estela makes no demur. The servant, Sebastiana, is not asked to comment. It is an ugly moment in a book which, for the most part, avoids coarseness at the most brutal of times.

The political vision of *The War of the End of the World* is bleak, and it would be possible to take issue with such absolute bleakness. But it is hard for a writer in the late years of this savage century not to have a tragic view of life, and Mario Vargas Llosa has written a modern tragedy on the grand scale, though not, mercifully, in the grand manner. At the end of its 550 pages, two images dominate its seething portrait of death, corruption, and faith. One is of the tracker Rufino, and anarchist Galileo Gall, each the somewhat absurd servant of an idea, hacking one another slowly to death; this image would seem to crystallize Vargas Llosa's political vision.

The second image, however, is redemptive. Thirty thousand people die in Canudos, and it would be easy to think that a God who demanded such sacrifices was a God to avoid like the plague. But Vargas Llosa, with the generosity of spirit that informs the entire novel, is willing to allow the last word to someone who accepts that the catastrophe was also a kind of triumph. The victorious soldiers, mopping up after the leveling of Canudos, are anxious to account for the one leader whose body has not been found. An old woman asks Colonel Macedo if he wants to know what happened to Abbot Joao and the Colonel nods eagerly. "Archangels took him up to heaven," she says, clacking her tongue. "I saw them."

SALMAN RUSHDIE

Salman Rushdie is the author of the novels *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* (Knopf).

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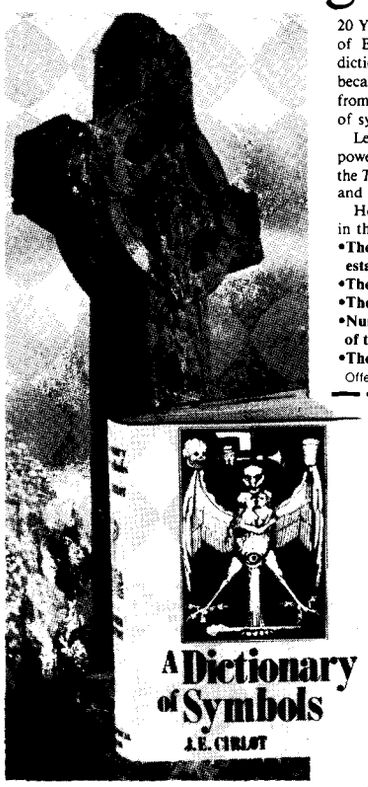

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THE KOESTLER PARDON

Arrow in the Blue
by Arthur Koestler

(Stein and Day, 415 pp., $19.95, $12.95 paper)

The Invisible Writing: The Second Volume of an Autobiography: 1932-40
by Arthur Koestler

(Stein and Day, 526 pp., $19.95, $12.95 paper)

Stranger on the Square
by Arthur and Cynthia Koestler

(Random House, 242 pp., $16.95)

We of Hell have time to read. So we have read all of your writings, Arthur Koestler, and have concluded that though the author of many a spirited and significant book, you are not so consummate a writer that we can in conscience—note, we do not say in *good* conscience—pardon you for writing well. W. H. Auden, who was here before you, thought that time would pardon Paul Claudel for his plays and his poems. We are not time, and our judgment of the French poet is quite different from time's, assuming the latter's to be what Auden predicted of it. Know then, Arthur Koestler: we are not going to pardon you for your writings if we decide that we have to condemn you for how you spent your life.

Now of what can you be accused? We are not the Christian God. We shall not accuse you of suicide because you took your life at the age of 76, suffering from Parkinson's Disease as you were, and so weakened by leukemia that you could hardly hold yourself erect by your own efforts. As a matter of fact, we are not sure that the Christian God would refuse to pardon your suicide. We recall reading with pleasure and interest a Christian defense of suicide by the English poet John Donne, which rather convinced us and may have convinced God, too.

Nor are you accused of the suicide along with yours of Cynthia Koestler, née Jeffries, who took her own life because you took yours. Though in excellent health at 55, she found she could not live without your presence. So her healthy body, much younger than yours, was found curled up beside your wasted one. Can you be condemned for having made life appear so much worth living for Cynthia Koestler that without you her one desire was to die? No, for this you cannot and shall not be blamed by us. No charge has been made against you for your death, or for that of your wife.

Nor are we concerned about your practiced, inveterate, and often regretted infidelities to the women with whom you were involved. You were not the master of your appetite for sex, or even for romance. You hurt a lot of women, many of whom had not hurt you. Such are the facts, and in the first two revealing and entrancing volumes of your autobiography, *The Invisible Writing* and *Arrow in the Blue*, you admit to this quite candidly. But we of Hell are no feminists, nor are we egalitarians. We think it best for humans if at least half of them are happy, and we do not see why the more joyful ones should not be males.

Our concern, Arthur Koestler, is with your social action. In 1931 you joined the Communist Party. In 1938 you broke with the Communist Party because of the Soviet mass arrests and the trials of the old Bolsheviks. That you joined the Communists in 1931 is not to your discredit, for you did so at a time when the future of Europe was at stake; it was quite possible to believe in 1931 that the working class, led by disciplined Communist cadres, could save Europe from catastrophe. By 1938 it was clear that the Communists would themselves initiate, and be part of, the coming catastrophe. That you broke with the Communists in 1938 is also to your credit.

But our first question about you has to do with the way you interpreted and treated your belonging to your people, that is to say, the Jews. Another Jewish intellectual, Rosa Luxemburg, found it impossible to interest herself especially in the sufferings of Jews. The sufferings of others, she said, interested her equally. Now you would never have said anything like that, for you did realize that you were personally involved in the plight of European Jewry, and that if the sufferings of all mankind were tunefully orchestrated, the Jewish plaint would be a very special note in the resulting score. This, Rosa did not quite understand.

Moreover, you did not overlook the fact that you were of Jewish origin, even though, as you admit in your autobiographies, you had a strong distaste for Judaism. The political journalist Walter Lippmann, an American Jew, ignored the fact that he was Jewish; he really did not understand Jews, and as a result, did not understand the Germans either. He was responsible for some absurd notions about what might ensue from the division of Germany after the war. We faulted Rosa for her attitude but then pardoned her. This should not encourage you, though: we pardoned her for qualities you do not yourself possess. As for Walter, judgment on him is still pending.

SO WE come to you. Here are the facts: you yourself regard some of your writings on the Jews as anti-Semitic. You have admitted your dislike for Yiddish and even for Hebrew, though you did learn a smattering of Hebrew in preparation for your trip to Palestine in 1926. Before that, in Vienna, you joined a dueling club. Now most Jews who joined such clubs did this to hide their Jewishness. However the members of the group you joined were Zionists, and you yourself became a Zionist, and an extremist among the Zionists, until, that is, you joined the Communist Party. And when you left the party, you again took up extremist Zionist views.

How are we to judge you? Your relation to your Jewishness is hardly clear either to you or to us. What are we to say? We take our cue here from a remark made at a conference on evil at Cerisy by the French philosopher Jean Wahl. In reply to someone's question, Wahl said, *"Oui, oui, c'est-à-dire, non."*

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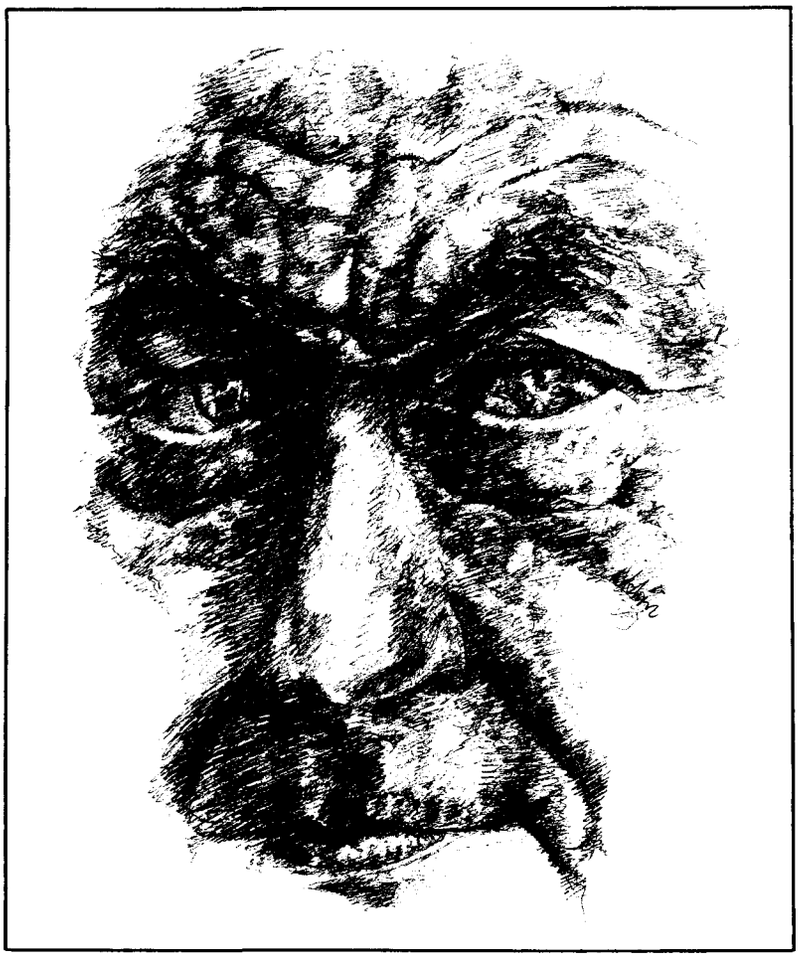
Combining the *oui* and the *non* of this boutade, the French Catholic novelist Georges Bernanos derived the name of his foremost protagonist of Evil, Mr. Ouine. Now then, are we going to condemn you for being ashamed of, detesting, or deriding your Jewishness? Our answer, like that of the French philosopher, has to be a contradictory one: yes, yes, that is to say, no.

Before we take up the remaining charge against you, we want to pay you some literary compliments, first of all for your 1946 novel about the struggle for Palestine, *Thieves in the Night*, in which your protagonist, Rabbi Joseph, expresses a thought about Jews which we find somewhat profound. Communing with himself, he denies that he is a nationalist: "This earth means something different to us than Croatia means to the Croats or America to the Americans. They are married to their countries; we are searching for a lost bride . . . there is this urge in us for the return to earth and normality; and there is that other urge to continue the hunt for a lost paradise." These remarks by your character helped soften our judgment of many things you said against Jews and Jewishness.



ARTHUR KOESTLER BY DAVID SCHORR FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

However, we are much more interested in the novel you completed in 1940, a month before the German invasion of France. This novel, *Darkness at Noon*, is probably your greatest achievement as a writer. It interests us because its subject is the Hell caused on earth by those who believed themselves destined to create an earthly paradise. Your novel dealt with the purges and show trials in the Soviet Union, your protagonist Rubashov being in some respects like the accused Bolshevik, Bukharin. Your novel appeared at a time when the confessions of the Bolsheviks tried by Stalin were not understood in the West. You explained their confessions in your novel by the power over their minds of the Communist ideology.

Was this a correct explanation of the confessions? Sixteen years after the novel appeared, Khrushchev, in his famous attack on Stalin, claimed that the old Bolsheviks had been made to confess by the method of "Beat! Beat! Beat!" Then was your explanation wrong? The editor of the American publication *Commentary*, Norman Podhoretz, asked you to defend your explanation, and you refused. But in 1979 the British magazine *Encounter* published an interview with Milovan Djilas in which the Yugoslavian leader backed your own explanation of the confessions. He declared that if he had been asked to confess to crimes he had not committed before 1938 he would have confessed, even without being tortured; after 1954 he would not have confessed, even under torture. So you must be commended for having seen a great truth at a time when there was no way of proving it. And you did this in the only way that could possibly persuade at the time, in a work of fiction.

We must also commend you for another of your novels, *The Gladiators*, which you wrote several years before *Darkness at Noon*, at a time when you were still a member of the Communist Party. We are concerned with this novel because it relates, as you shall see, to the important charge against you which we are here to consider. This novel deals with the revolt of the Roman gladiators led by Spartacus.(We regret that it was not your novel about Spartacus and his followers that was made into a film, for the one we saw on Channel Inferno was based on someone else's novel about the same events. We recall it only because of the remarkable performance by Laurence Olivier as the Roman millionaire Crassus.)

You will recall that in *The Gladiators* you criticized Spartacus for having been unable, for moral reasons, to employ the Machiavellian measures used by the Romans and necessary to win a victory over Rome. You were thinking, like other Communists, that the end justifies the means, and that in his struggle with Rome, Spartacus had not been able to take up the means necessary for success. As you yourself commented on your protagonist in *The Invisible Writing*: "Spartacus is a victim of the 'law of detours,' which compels the leader on the road to Utopia to be 'ruthless for the sake of pity.' " According to your version of the matter, Spartacus was insufficiently ruthless. He refused to employ a measure you think was necessary, the purge of dissidents by crucifixion; thus he doomed his revolution to defeat. You did not quite realize that the means you criticized Spartacus for not having employed would have made him exactly like the Roman masters he hated.

We had here in Hell almost two thousand years ago the Greek slave of a Roman patrician who was freed by his

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master on the condition that he serve in the Roman theater as an actor. At the same time he became a convert to Christianity. The Greek knew that in becoming an actor he was sentencing himself to death, for in the Roman theater of the day an actor playing the part of someone doomed to die was actually killed on the stage. Now the Greek's friends, mainly Greeks themselves, some of them slaves, urged him not to become a Christian, to convert instead to some other cult, to Mithraism or to Judaism, for these cults did not promise him punishment in the next world for leaving this one. Only Christianity regarded suicide as a sin, and his readiness to go on the Roman stage could be interpreted as a kind of suicide.

Nevertheless he preferred to expect punishment in the next world in order to free himself in this world from feeling that he belonged to Rome. And no belief other than the Christian one was strong enough, he felt, to put him outside the Roman Imperium. When he came here he fully expected us to torture him. When we refused, he told us that this was a kind of torture, for it made Christianity less real, which made Rome more real. And this was more painful to him than any pain we were able to inflict. We had to call on the aid of some Christian theologians, of whom there are a goodly number here, to prove to him that his choice of the stage in Rome above certain menial tasks was not really the choice of suicide.

WE BRING this matter up because the power of Rome in the ancient world is not so different from what the power of the Communist world was in your time. After you left the Communist Party in 1938 your whole effort, intellectually and morally, might be described as the effort to find some way of escaping from and helping others to curtail the Soviet order, which you watched growing ever more powerful. In *The Invisible Writing* you say something interesting about the difficulties you faced in breaking with communism:

> While I was a Communist, I felt surrounded by the sympathy of progressive-minded people who did not like communism, but respected my convictions. After I had broken with communism, the same class of people treated me with contempt.

And you went on as follows:

> I was 26 when I joined the Communist Party, and 33 when I left it. The years between had been decisive years, both by the season of life which they filled, and the way they filled it with a single-minded purpose. Never before nor after had life been so brimful of meaning as during these seven years. They had the superiority of a beautiful error over a shabby truth.

About the power of communism over others we shall quote you too, and at some length, so we hope that you can bear to hear your own words:

> Every period has its dominant religion and hope, and "Socialism" in a vague and undefined sense was the hope of the early twentieth century. So much so that German "National-Socialists," French "Radical-Socialists," Italian "Christian-Socialists" all felt the need to include the fetish-word into their names. In the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics this hope seemed to have found its incarnation; and the magic worked, and still works, with varying degrees of intensity, on a considerable portion of mankind. The realization of the full truth about the regime which now rules one-third of the world: that it is the most inhuman regime in human history and the gravest challenge that mankind has as yet encountered, is psychologically as difficult to face for most of us as an empty heaven was for Gothic man.

Such was the power of communism over your own mind and the minds of others in the world of 1938, and such was the world when you departed from it in 1983.

Which brings us to the one charge leveled against you which we are here seriously to consider. The charge is this: in a world which required radical change, you found no way of being radical. We are aware, of course, of all the things you did. You did not neglect to write most eloquent tracts against Communist ideology, such as your very fine essay, "The Yogi and the Commissar." You joined The Congress For Cultural Freedom and participated in their propaganda activities. But you quickly saw that the political impact of such efforts was limited, and finally you withdrew altogether from them, declaring yourself outside of politics.

Still, you did not abandon all hope of being useful, and in some radical way. What you did was to turn your attention to all sorts of odd ways of thinking about the world: to Lamarckian biology, Jungian coincidence, extrasensory perception; to psi-experiences of all sorts; to what the brilliant Hegelian-Marxist philosopher, Alexandre Kojève, in his

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own words a "strictly orthodox Stalinist," once described in an argument with Roger Caillois as "the Spirit of Error, which is to say, Trotskyism."

You gave yourself unstintingly to this form of "Trotskyism," seeking out absurd facts and deviant logics, as if only by casting doubt on the truth-finding power of the positive sciences could one prevent the triumphant extension of the Soviet system over Europe, America, and finally over all of humanity. Now can you have really believed that the dark corners and the byways of the sciences could become the high-road to the final truth about things? No, you are not so naïve so as to believe anything like that. You thought, rather, that you were engaged in a delaying, guerrilla action against the sciences, so as to prevent their unobstructed sway over men's thoughts. You must have assumed that the victory of positive science over every form of obscurantism would guarantee the victory of the Soviet Union over the West. Others, thinking more or less along the same lines, have backed the Catholic Church, the Moral Majority, the Gush Emunim. Solzhenitsyn, for his part, is supporting the Greek Orthodox faith.

But was there something else you could have done politically, and which would have had a truly radical effect? This is the question that has to be answered if we are to make a proper judgment of how you spent your life. Indeed, you yourself want to be judged by whether you succeeded or did not succeed in being a radical in a world you yourself describe as needing nothing so much as radical change. Was there any possibility for radical political action which you overlooked? Was there any point in seeking out some underdeveloped country to promote a good kind of revolution there as Che Guevara tried to do in Bolivia?

No, you rejected any such possibility, for it would only have led to further strengthening the empire created by Lenin and Stalin. Even a revolution of the blacks in South Africa would not be radical in your understanding of the word, though the bloodletting would be enormous. Such a revolution would also add to the power of the Soviet empire, whatever its value temporarily to the blacks in that part of the world.

How is it that others, eminent as writers and even as political scientists, men who were your contemporaries, thought, and continue to think, that radical political action is possible even in the welfare states of the West? Are they mistaken? We have long considered this matter and have finally concluded that they are indeed mistaken. What caused their mistake on this point was the student movement beginning in the American universities during the 1960s and terminating in the famous "events" in Paris in 1968. The desperate actions of the students served to hide for almost twenty years from the best theorists of social action the fact that radical politics was no longer possible, and it is the impossibility of radical political action which has motivated the violent acts of many of the terrorist groups in Italy, Germany, and Japan. Terrorism by its very nature seems to be a guarantee of "radicalness" in a situation where one's considered judgment would indicate that radical action is just not possible.

And so, Arthur Koestler, we have agreed to pardon you for what you

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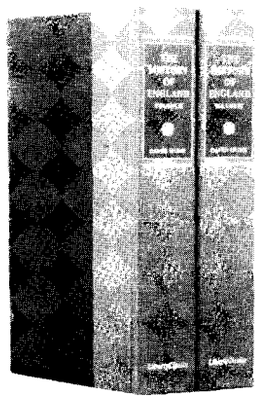

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failed to accomplish, since one cannot be blamed for not having achieved the impossible. What you did does not stir us to reprove you, and what you failed to do in our opinion could not have been done. So we welcome you, unreproved, to whatever may be the delights of Hell. You will be able to watch the goings-on on earth on Channel Inferno, and even review some of your past appearances on British and American television. You will hear your autobiographies discussed, even the last especially affecting but unfinished journal, *Stranger on the Square*, which has been published in one volume with Cynthia Koestler's pages from her autobiography, also unfinished, which deal mainly with her relations with you. We advise you to take what pleasures you can from such experiences and not regard them as trivial, for otherwise you may feel quite lost in our endlessly long dark halls, so hung with silences.

LIONEL ABEL

Lionel Abel's *The Intellectual Follies* will be published by Norton in November.

AN ISLAND DIVIDED

Cyprus
by Christopher Hitchens

(Quartet Books, 192 pp., $15.95)

On the tenth anniversary of the Turkish invasion of northern Cyprus, Christopher Hitchens writes about the complexities and consequences of that episode with intense emotion. He also writes in anger about the undoing, or at least the partition, of the island republic. On the whole, he writes cogently and convincingly, albeit in parts with some exaggeration and over simplification.

Unlike Nancy Crawshaw's detailed study of "the Cyprus revolt," published in 1978, Hitchens's book is a political essay, a somewhat personal and polemical tract. It sets out the author's reaction not only to the events on the island since 1955, but also to the policies of Greece, Turkey, Britain, and the United States, especially after 1964. His contention is straightforward: that the Colonels' regime in Athens (1967-74), in collusion with the United States, was determined to overthrow Archbishop Makarios as a prelude to the partition of Cyprus between Greece and Turkey.

A corollary contention of the author is that Britain, one of the three guarantor powers of Cyprus's independence, with a presence on Cyprus in its sovereign bases, deliberately failed to intervene in July-August 1974 (as it had the right and duty to do under the Zurich and London agreements of 1960) in order to forestall the Turkish invasion. Such failure, the author argues, was due to Britain's dependence on American policy; that in turn was formulated and conducted by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, whom Hitchens bitterly denounces as the source of evil, criticizing him for his disingenuous support of the Greek junta in Athens and for his parallel condoning of the Turkish invasion of the island.

Although Hitchens recognizes the endemic difficulty of ethnic and sectarian differences in Cyprus, he asserts that these did not constitute insurmountable problems for the young republic. They were simply exploited, blatantly and cruelly, by outside powers. He also accepts the weaknesses of the 1960 constitution, but does not quite come to grips with Makarios's lethargic attitude toward its amendment. Nor does he elaborate on Makarios's unwillingness to extend to the Turkish minority the kind of constitutional arrangement, that is, the guarantees, that would have afforded them a greater feeling of security.

Hitchens fails to give full weight to the fact that the constitution in practice consecrated ethnicity and sectarianism; both sides used it in order to promote the interests of their respective communities. In such circumstances the idea of a "Cypriot nation" was difficult to develop or to promote. The idea of an *ethnarch*—in Greek perceptions, the leader of the *genos*, i.e., the Greek Orthodox Greek community, but more generally the religious head of the *ethnos*, or nation, the identity of which is determined by religion, not by territory—as the head of a secular state and government was not an auspicious beginning, given the history of the island, and the historical relationship between Greeks and Turks, Greece and Turkey.

"The urgency of the battle against British rule," Hitchens writes,

> had put the Greek Cypriots in a position where the Orthodox Church, the Greek flag and the intoxicating slogans of Hellenism had shaped their liberation. . . . From the start, a strong element of vainglory was present; the boastful conviction that *enosis* [union with Greece] . . . was still attainable.

This is all true. Hitchens does not consider, however, the very complex and convoluted Greek notion of *ethnos* and *genos* to place these statements in proper perspective. Church leaders were always in favor of the *genos* (Hellenism), but more often than not opposed to the idea of an independent Greek nation-state, or *ethnos-kratos*. The latter detracted from their prerogative of leadership, and undermined their other interests. As is always the case with the periphery, Greek Cypriots tended to be more nationalistic about *enosis* than either conditions warranted or reality decreed. Greek politicians on the mainland exploited this trend for their own purposes.

The fact remains that the independent republic of Cyprus that emerged in 1960 was not a secular polity. Its constitution in effect institutionalized the sectarian interests of the two communities, Greeks and Turks, or the two nations. Makarios did not try—and when he did he was unsuccessful—to transform Cyprus into a secular unitary state. He was certainly for an independent Cyprus in which the Greek majority would remain politically dominant over the Turkish minority, but he failed to establish a political system outside religion. He could not, of course, do that since he was himself, at least officially, a man of religion.

Intercommunal strife, therefore, remained endemic. Yet outsiders could not exploit or manipulate it as totally as Hitchens suggests. They did so in the circumstances essentially because the Makarios regime had failed to deal with it. The vision Makarios had of the state of Cyprus was the one he presided over

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for fourteen years. There had been no alternative vision. The lack of imagination in this connection, alas, led to the tragic invasion and subsequent virtual partition of the island by Turkish forces, whose continued presence on the island ten years later simply has no plausible basis—at least on the surface—other than the support and promotion of the puerile ambitions of Mr. Rauf Denktash, the Turkish Cypriot leader. All the same, what always lurked in the background to undermine further the unitary republican polity was, of course, *enosis* on the Greek side, and *taksim*, or partition, on the Turkish side. The recent lesson of Lebanon suggests the price that must be paid for the failure to construct a regime outside, or independently of, religion.

AS FOR THE crisis of 1963-64, Hitchens tells us practically nothing about how General Grivas, leader of EOKA, the National Organization of Cypriot Fighters, returned to the island. He fails to consider, for example, whether or not there was any connivance on the part of the Centre Union government of the late George Papandreou in the general's return to Cyprus. Moreover, the claim by Andreas Papandreou in 1971 that "Cyprus lies at the heart of the tragic political developments that had led to the death of democracy in Greece" should be subjected to critical scrutiny, and not be accepted at face value. There were other deep causes for the "death of democracy in Greece" in 1967. Hitchens, in short, is too facile with his assertions, or at least with his ready acceptance of the assertions of Greek politicians. By July 1965 Andreas Papandreou himself was very much a bone of contention in the soured relations between his father, the Prime Minister, and the King. By resorting to pejorative epithets such as the "Ex-Nazi Queen Frederika"—what the Greeks refer to as "*tambeles*"—in place of argument or explanation, Hitchens has succumbed to the average Greek's notion of evidence ("But everybody knows it"); moreover, this detracts from his otherwise knowledgeable analysis of the intricacies of Greek party and personal politics.

On the basis of published statements by Turkish politicians over the last twenty to twenty-five years, as well as other publications emanating from Turkey, it is plausible to infer that Turkey views Cyprus, not to mention the sovereign Greek Aegean islands close to

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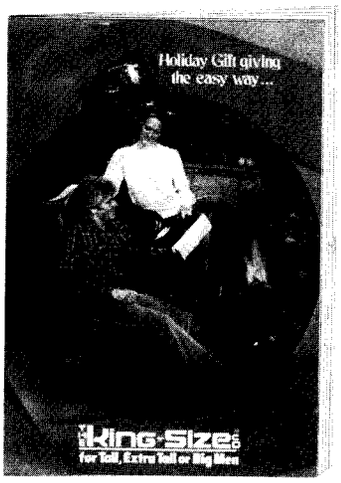

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the Turkish littoral, as potentially integral territories of Turkey's strategic space. It is equally plausible to expect that any Turkish government will, at the opportune time, try to "integrate" them into Turkey. To do that, needless to say, would mean risking a war with a NATO ally, Greece, and trampling over every bilateral agreement Turkey has signed since the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. It is in this sense that Hitchens's tract has highlighted the Turkish exploitation of a strategic minority in a weak island republic, its sectarian composition, and its strategic importance to its American superpower patron.

WHAT Hitchens fails to consider, however, is the complex and intense pressures on the United States in the summer of 1974, arising in particular from the crisis in the Middle East, that is, from the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war and its aftermath. It is not enough to accuse the Americans of overlooking the details, of being concerned with the "bigger picture," when they connived in the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. A superpower with global strategic concerns is always, for good or ill, influenced by the "bigger picture." And Cyprus is practically part of the Levant—and, by extension, of the turbulent and continuously erupting Middle East. This is an essential perspective which any student of Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean must always bear in mind. Even if the Americans were prepared to forestall the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, the question remains whether they could have done so if the Turks were determined to carry it through. Once again the old conundrum of how far or well the patron can restrain or control the client in the political power game presents itself.

Hitchens is correct in arguing that Cyprus is the symbol of "unresolved Greek and Turkish conflict." What is less certain is his contention that it is "emblematic of all the difficulties faced by an emerging modern Greece, which seeks to escape from being a Balkan country dependent on America, and to become a respected member of the European community." The uncertainty is over the question of dependence and independence. Evidence from a similar search by other states in parallel situations in the recent past suggests that the entelechy of such an evolution cannot be guaranteed. Nor is it clear that Greeks, and in particular the present Greek regime, are anxious to become "a respected member of the European community." The point is arguable.

What is certain, though, is that for the foreseeable future Cyprus will remain divided, its northern part occupied by Turkish forces. Hitchens rightly points to the more ominously permanent aspects of this occupation in his excellent discussion of the ongoing settlement of northern Cyprus by mainland Turks. Given its rapidly increasing population (over 45 million) and the requirements of its economic development, Turkey will also seek to expand its writ over such disputed, or contested, territories as Cyprus and the nearer Aegean islands. A recent trend in Turkish policy, which appears to be part of a wider strategy, may be noted—namely, the extensive economic and commercial activities of Turkey in the Middle East, especially in Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Jordan. Coupled to a deliberately closer association, if not identification, with the recent Islamic revival throughout the region, one can reasonably speak of Turkey's desire for a greater role in the Middle East. It is these new developments in Turkish policy which Greece must confront and counter. One should not be surprised if the present regime in Greece were to aim for closer relations with Israel as a counterweight to Turkey's expanded economic and Islamic policy in the Arab Middle East.

The difficulty is that, contrary to Hitchens's expectation, a future unified Cyprus—even with AKEL (the Cyprus Communist Party) in power—will not be secular in politics and law. Archbishop Makarios, the hero of this book, however hard and well he fought to guard the independence of the republic, was unable to make it a secular polity, partly because he could not countenance a political status for the Turkish minority equal to that of the Greek majority. The Turkish minority sought and found a protector in Ankara. The intransigent Makarios was hoist by his own petard, and in the end fell prey to the enemies of that independent republic.

An independent Cyprus, composed of the people of two nations, Greeks and Turks, so disparate in religion and national history, was never really on. That is why, in a way, there was never such an entity before 1960. Once it was formed, however, one must agree with Hitchens that its undoing was callous and disgraceful—not least because it sets a bad precedent for so many other similar parts of the world.

P. J. VATIKIOTIS

P. J. Vatikiotis, who teaches at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, is the author of *Nasser & His Generation* (St. Martin), among other books.

LOVE IN LONDON

Foreign Affairs
by Alison Lurie

(Random House, 291 pp., $15.95)

Alison Lurie's world, for all its domestic discord, has always been snug. She draws us inside the sheltered environs of academe and marriage with homely scenes and limpid prose, and then regales us with indiscreet confidences about her characters' lives. We are made to feel a privileged acquaintance, with whom she can share her exasperation about the blunders, the neuroses, and the self-indulgences of the others. In her early fiction, and in her widely admired fifth novel, *The War Between the Tates*, Lurie submitted her characters to all of the indignities of the post-'50s social and sexual revolution, and left them battered and dazed. In her last novel, *Only Children*, a clever though rather cloying pastoral comedy which takes place at a summer house over the Fourth of July weekend in 1932, she examined the sexual antics of two couples and their hostess largely through the eyes of two 8-year-old girls. Underlying all of this disorder was the sardonic voice and steady hand of Lurie herself,

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deftly putting the pieces back in place.

In *Foreign Affairs*, although Lurie leaves her American setting behind and ventures into the bowels of the British Museum and the drawing rooms of country estates, she carries along many of her old belongings. The two characters at the center of the story, Vinnie Miner and Fred Turner, are by now familiar types in her fiction: professors from Corinth University who are painfully aware of their own provincialism, but seemingly incapable of overcoming it. Vinnie is a jaded, unattractive middle-aged specialist in children's folklore with "no significant identity outside her career"; Fred, a dashing but priggish and dim-witted young colleague who is writing a book about John Gay and pining over his estranged wife, Roo (who has grown from the animal-loving child in *The War Between the Tates* into a defiantly feminist photographer). They are on leave to pursue projects in London of equally dubious scholarly merit, and to indulge in unrestrained Anglophilia.

UNEXPECTEDLY, however, sexual adventures beckon for both of them. In an effort to forget Roo, Fred impulsively takes up with a stunning British aristocrat and actress named Lady Rosemary Radley; and Vinnie, who is nursing her rage over a vicious reference in *The Atlantic* to her life's work as "a scholarly study of playground doggerel," is slowly won over, to her chagrin, by the man who sat next to her on the flight to London, a retired waste disposal engineer from Tulsa named Chuck Mumpson. As Vinnie is making her startling discovery of the true Chuck (he's a lovable—even witty—oaf, not a boorish one), Fred is slowly uncovering the sordid truth about Lady Rosemary (her refined Boucher-like features mask dissipation, just as his own Edwardian looks and manners disguise an empty soul). In the process each stumbles across the rotting underbelly of Britain's upper class, and both briefly reckon with their own neglected consciences.

There is potential here for the kind of sharp social satire Lurie excels in, and the novel contains flashes of her distinctive wit and style. But *Foreign Affairs*, like its two protagonists, is hampered by an inability to surmount its own pettiness. The plot is mechanical and cluttered with unpolished jottings on everything from tourist disorientation to the ways in which specialists in Vinnie's field relate to real children; and the characters are both overwrought and undeveloped. Even Lurie's keen ear for colloquial speech and her eye for revealing mannerisms frequently fail her: in characterizing Chuck and Rosemary, Lurie vacillates between joining Vinnie and Fred in their crude typecasting—Chuck talks in an exaggerated Western twang; Rosemary flutters and giggles and pouts—and taking them to task for it.

All of Lurie's novels are programmatic: like most comic writers she relies upon formal contrivances to heighten irony, to create startling juxtapositions, to make a larger point about the individual's accommodations to the demands of society. In *The War Between the Tates* Erica and Brian's marital battles were punctuated by a sonorous voice-over narration which compared them to the social and political upheavals accompanying the Vietnam War. In *Only Children* Lurie failed in her occasional attempts to blend the naïveté of two little girls with her own stinging cynicism. But Erica and Brian were energetically and realistically drawn; and Lolly and Mary Ann, if somewhat limited as narrators, brought a fresh glimpse into the old themes of marital boredom and infidelity. In both novels Lurie credibly evoked a chapter in American social history. Alas, in *Foreign Affairs* the characters are so unappealing and the contrivances of plot so labored that the ironies are leaden rather than leavening. And, its title notwithstanding, the only affairs she addresses here are carnal.

As for the lessons Lurie lays out, they are of the most rudimentary socio-psychological sort. Yet these two reputable professors are maddeningly slow learners. Fred, filled with self-love, can't find happiness until his obsession with what Lady Rosemary represents is replaced by a clear-eyed recognition of what she is. (Even his lovers assume the shape of academic equations in his mind: "She is small, soft, and fair; Roo large, sturdy, and dark. . . . In manner and speech Rosemary is graceful, melodious; Roo by comparison clumsy and loud—in fact, coarse. Just as, compared with England, America is large, naïve, noisy, crude, etc.") It is during a game of charades—what else?—that he has his first vague glimmerings that Rose-

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mary is not quite the fragile English flower she seems. Suddenly she and her cultivated friends appear raucous, even depraved: Rosemary "is not only vulgarly made up and loaded with costume jewelry, but is wearing the lace butterfly nightgown in which, just a few hours ago. . . . He wants to protest, but makes himself laugh along with the rest; after all, it's only a game." Vinnie, for her part, filled with self-hate, must not only cease to see Chuck Mumpson as a source of revulsion and pity, but herself as well. "Vinnie doesn't want her London friends to confuse her with Chuck, to think of her as after all rather simple, vulgar, and amusing—a typical American." In the end, of course, it becomes clear to Fred that Lady Rosemary, far from representing "the best of England," actually embodies the destructive self-indulgence of a decadent class society; and to Vinnie that Chuck, who reminds her of all that's shameful and ugly in America, in fact personifies American openness and stolid decency.

STILL, simplicities and stereotypes aside, Lurie is as deft as ever when she turns to the mortifications of romance. She is an uncannily accurate observer of the ambivalent emotions that enter into unconventional sexual alliances, and when she abandons her gimmicky plot devices and moral posturing, *Foreign Affairs* is funny, touching, and even suspenseful. As Fred's affair with Lady Rosemary is being consumed in horror (the final revelation scene is a weirdly appropriate combination of Hitchcock suspense and Lurie humor), Vinnie's affair with Chuck is being consummated in a moment of poignant farce. This odd couple is finally brought together thanks to a suitably ludicrous matchmaker: Chuck's plastic fold-up raincoat.

At last, a character with integrity. This homely garment not only has a perverse charm of its own, it also helps to transform Vinnie, the perpetually peevish man-hating snob, into a flustered, touchingly vulnerable woman. When Vinnie and Chuck first bump into each other in London, she disdainfully notes that he is wearing "a semi-transparent greenish plastic raincoat of the most repellent American sort," and registers it as an emblem of his personality: coarse, tasteless. Yet the raincoat comes to show Vinnie more about her own shortcomings than it does about Chuck's. Her hatred of it festers over the weeks, and she turns on it in furious embarrassment after Chuck's first bumbling embrace in her tiny kitchen, in which he knocks a bowl of watercress and avocado soup over them both: "If he only had a decent raincoat instead of that awful transparent plastic thing—she gives it a nasty look as it hangs in the hall—then he could wear that while his clothes dried, or even go home in it." In several quick scenes the raincoat explains Vinnie's social pretensions and fragile dignity; and in the scenes that follow, it gives credence to the evolution of her contempt for Chuck into tolerance, affection, and—most remarkably of all—hearty sexual appetite.

In *Foreign Affairs* Lurie shows once again that she is a farsighted observer of human fallibilities, but an odd kind of moralist. Hers is a particularly brutal form of mockery: she forces her characters into compromising positions and then denies them any real escape. The end of the novel superficially follows the traditional comic pattern—the characters are sent back home; the social order resumes—but Lurie doesn't think much of spiritual regeneration. In the departure lounge at Heathrow, Fred begins to berate himself for behaving like a cad toward both Roo (who has forgiven him) and Rosemary (who has not), and to reflect on his shattering experiences in London. "Well, if he's learned one thing this year, it's that everyone is vulnerable, no matter how strong and independent they look. . . . Fred feels worse about himself than he has ever felt in his adult life." Even this elementary insight, however, is quickly supplanted: "he is, after all, a young, well-educated, good-looking American, an assistant professor in a major university; and he is on his way home to a beautiful woman who loves him." Vinnie, whose affair has ended no less disastrously, is courageous enough to confess to her gossipy British friend Edwin, who makes a slighting remark about Chuck, that she loved him. "Something has changed, she thinks. She isn't the same person she was; she has loved and been loved." An hour later she's telling herself, "It's not her nature, not her fate to be loved . . . her fate is to be always single, unloved, alone."

Of course, neither Fred nor Vinnie has essentially changed at all: he is still impossibly obtuse, she has reverted to whining self-pity. This elaborate novel is more of an exercise in verbal and structural ingenuity than it is a full-fledged comedy or melodrama. The snugness has become oppressive, and the secrets Lurie invites us to share, no longer enticing, are for the most part trivial, sordid, and sad.

DOROTHY WICKENDEN

THE ROAD TO MARRIAGE

Hands And Hearts: A History of Courtship in America by Ellen K. Rothman

(Basic Books, 370 pp., $19.95)

Ellen K. Rothman's *Hands And Hearts: A History of Courtship in America* is a painstakingly researched, startlingly conservative study of American courtship based on the diaries and letters of 350 young men and women who reached adulthood and "courted" with intent to marry between 1770 and 1920. Rothman organizes her material into avowedly loose periods: 1770-1840, 1840-1880, 1880-1920, with an epilogue on the decades between 1920 and 1980. Her subjects are largely middle-class, well-educated, northeasterners. Their perennial aim, Rothman reiterates, is to unite love, sexual happiness, and married security. This aim, in Rothman's account, is both natural and realistic. Questions of finance determine the marriage date, not the marriage partner. Each sex has its special problems: men must be ardent, and aggressive, but sensitive; women must be expressive, but modest. Such problems, however, add variation to the protocol of a given courting game; they do not sabotage the game itself. In her final sentence, Rothman assures us that "Americans" today are

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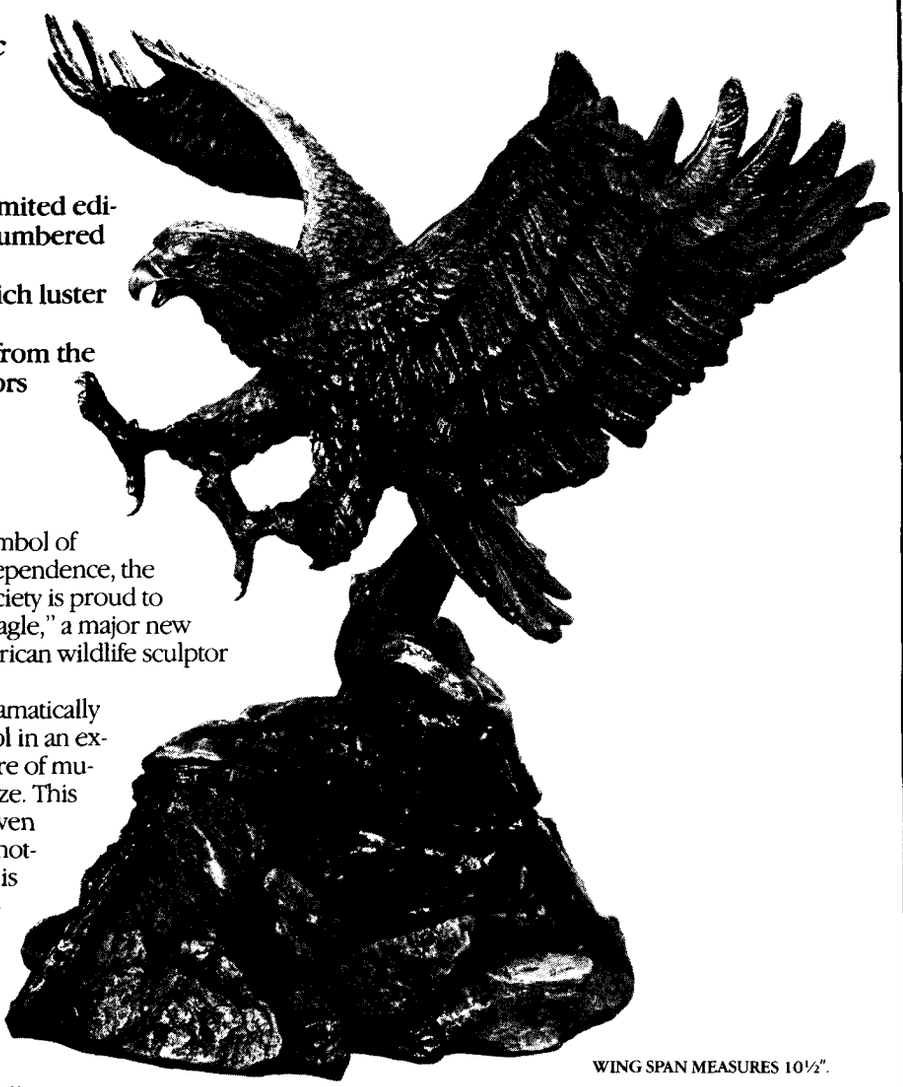

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"no more willing to let go [of marriage] than their grandparents were."

Rothman's subtitle promises her readers a "history." In her introduction, she more accurately likens her book to an "album of old photographs." *Hands And Hearts* is less history than social history of a sentimentalized and suspect nature. What at once invalidates and renders invaluable Rothman's book is the plentiful testimony of her characters, the "photographs" she has organized as a Valentine collage. These young men and women facing matrimony are eager and reluctant by turns; their responses suggest serious problems in the institution, or in its American incarnation, they are about to enter. Rothman, far too skillful and committed a scholar to withhold the evidence she has worked admirably to acquire, is reticent about the full range of its implications.

Since the work of Engels, the origins of the family power structure, whether in civilized courting or in cave calling, have been a sexual and political issue. Not for Rothman. She manages to deal with feminist material without betraying, except in an occasional footnote, or in a felicitous, sympathetic and passing turn of phrase, that there has ever been a debate on the subject. In *Hands And Hearts*, the feminist movement, past and present, is calmly erased.

LET ME honor Rothman's premises before I question her use of them. History must never be simply the study of problems. The function of social history, of which Rothman is a genuinely gifted practitioner, is to remind us of the continuities and the imperceptible quality of the variations in communal and individual lives. Rothman's book helpfully underscores, for example, the distinction between the prescriptive literature of sexual behavior most readily available to the historian and the actual social practices often invisible to a later eye. Several of Rothman's nineteenth-century female subjects resolutely shrug off the confining implications of the Victorian ideal of "true womanhood." "I am not an angel," one pluckily wrote her fiancé. Contrary to injunction again, American young men have always wanted their mates to desire them sexually. One husband-to-be is quick to threaten his beloved with the horrid title of a "fossil remain" if she is not more forthcoming—and this in 1852.

Social history has its responsibilities as well, however, and Rothman largely ignores them. Change may well be experienced as less vivid or simply different than the interpretations of historians more theoretically or dramatically minded than Rothman suggests, but it is nonetheless a reality. Of course, Rothman pays some heed to the developments in courtship that occur in the periods she investigates. Letters are the key means of self-revelation among lovers in the early eras, phone calls and dates in the later. Modern parents, permissive like their predecessors, became concerned over their eligible offsprings' emotional and sexual safety in an urban, casual age where less and less was known about a person considered acceptable enough to "date." In postbellum America, courtship and marriage ceased to be communal matters; they were private affairs skillfully orchestrated in public by the customs and conventions of mass culture. There is nothing novel here. Common sense, cursory reading, a life of one's own, and a dim recollection of old Aunt Etta's reminiscences would bring anyone to the same realizations without consulting Rothman's book.

WHAT IS surprising is the flatness of the terrain of courtship, often tortuous to those who actually travel it, across which Rothman conducts us. Consensus is our watchword. I use the possessive first person plural advisedly here, because I found myself swept into Rothman's collective genteel enterprise as early as page four, where I learned that "most of us subscribe to [the] belief that there is no 'source of truer, purer happiness' than marriage." The gay women, the unmarried women, the divorced women set aside in these pages surely do not share this belief, but this need not trouble "us."

Rothman tells her readers that female friendships were important, but that they never played the dominant role in women's lives that fond feminist historians of a decade ago hoped they did. Rothman will also explain away the problem of unmarried women. In the earlier periods, they were often destined to lives of poverty. In the later eras, the women who did not marry were actually affirming marriage: it had become a "choice," in short, a kind of privilege. Forget the fact that in a late-nineteenth-century America a record 11 percent of these lucky women exercised their prerogative negatively and remained single. Strict adherents to American marriage as it is today need not fret over contemporary divorce statistics. Since four out of five divorced people remarry, 50 percent of them within three years, Americans apparently regard life without marriage as "shipwreck."

The divorce epidemic and its anteced-

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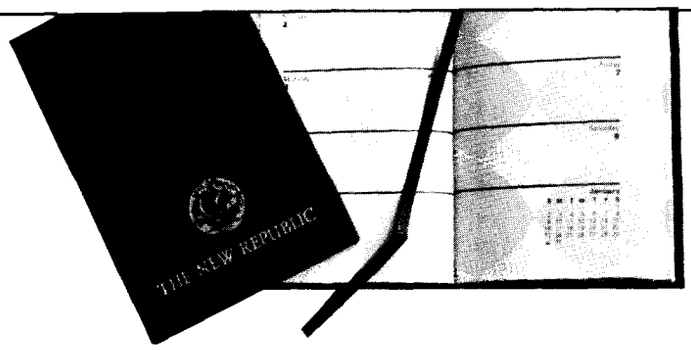
ents are clearly not Rothman's subject; neither, less justifiably, is any portion of married life. "Courtship" may function as a closed sequence in the fantasies and, to a degree, in the lives of American women. Harlequin romances and their ilk testify to the depth of the current feminine need for such closure. Yet the courtships Rothman chooses to investigate were highly self-conscious preludes to marriage: engagement is most often her topic. Rothman gives her readers ample opportunity to see how squarely if fearfully American young women have always faced the discrepancy between the ideal of marriage that informs courtship, and the reality of the failed marriages they see everywhere around them. Feminist Angelina Grimké's assessment of "the almost universal unhappiness of married persons" was widely shared, Rothman tells us, "by her more conventional female contemporaries."

ROTHMAN, like the authors of today's mass trade romances, a specialist in hopes and fears severed from their real objects, closes the narrative door on her couples as they leave the altar. She fails to explore manuscript collections like the Grimké-Weld, Beecher-Stowe, Peabody-Mann, Lydia Huntley Sigourney, and "Fanny Fern" papers. These letters document the extended phases of her subject, the "life cycle" of courtship, before and after marriage. In one of her tactful wrap-up paragraphs, Rothman remarks that most young women, once married, were "happier than they expected to be." Since many of these prospective brides link matrimony with the death, extinction, or partial loss of the self, this comment tells us little. Her female subjects, Rothman shows us, feared obliteration with marriage; her narrative structure enforces the penalty they dreaded.

Rothman's young men and women, from whom she quotes generously and helpfully, are as she promises, "eloquent"—on the troubled nature of the American matrimonial enterprise from its very inception. The men are slow to commit and, once committed, eager to consummate; the women express, again and again, their unwillingness to go from the state of courtship or, preferably, engagement, to that of marriage. Feminine waverings, long before, or even at the altar, are natural; "jitters," Rothman implicitly reminds us, are a pervasive, ahistorical phenom-



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enon. When they occur, however, in such regular patterns as those Rothman's subjects evince, they may be symptomatic of an undiagnosed disease: unlived personal and collective history.

Rothman suggests that her brides hesitated to leave the relative independence they enjoyed in their original families. This analysis, while true, seems inadequate. Rothman may possess the fair-mindedness to see that marriage puts equal pressure on its male and female participants: her subjects, of both sexes, do not. One prospective bridegroom sympathizes with the pain her "surrender" must cost his bride-to-be; he is clearly aware, and content, that he will pay, not "surrender" his way. A number of Rothman's feminine subjects anxiously air their concomitant desires to lead their own lives and to marry. In 1860 one bright girl of sixteen finds all her "old restless ambition aroused" by rival male students. "Miniature orators" she wittily labels them, all the while aware that subjugation to such a one constitutes her future "domestic" fate. The suppressed conflict evident here is painful, and unstressed.

Rothman consistently downplays the realistic fear of childbearing at which her female subjects hint in eras when childbirth risked the mother's autonomy and her life. The fact, discovered by Rothman, that Victorian women fantasizing to their fiancés about the approaching wedded state, omit children consistently from the imagined hearthside scene is, in Rothman's word, "revealing"; she leaves the matter there. Discussing a later period, Rothman notes a "painful irony." In the early twentieth century, when newly leisure-rich husbands had more time for home life, when wives could and did choose to have fewer children—just at this juncture, married women, aided by emergent domestic technology and a changing spirit, spent ever less time in the home.

Questions arise amid all Rothman's well-assembled and convincing proof that most American women have wanted to marry, even in the face of many obstacles, external and internal, even at clearly high costs, known and unknown. Did they know what they were doing? Did they need to know? If not, does anyone? Feminine attempts at social analysis, much less protest, receive short shrift in *Hands And Hearts*. Rothman dismisses Seneca Falls and its implications in a page or two. Those involved constituted a mere "handful": Rothman intends no pun. The Purity campaign, a crusade of near mass proportions conducted by late Victorian women against the double standard and male sexuality, must be acknowledged. It turns out, by Rothman's account, to have been a harmless affair. Any young purity advocate knew, as Eleanor Abbott did, that while men in general were dangerous brutes, her own father, brothers, even the family butcher, the bishop, and any genteel male poet in favor, were trustworthy and admirable beings. So much for a movement that successfully if briefly bucked male industry and helped women win the vote. Ideology apparently is fanaticism when espoused by the few, and mere frippery when upheld by the many.

ROTHMAN, allergic to politics or theory herself, reminds us of Tocqueville's perception of the radical and uniquely American discrepancy between the freedom of the American girl and, in his words, the "extreme dependence" of the American wife. While America established its identity as the fastest-growing, most economically productive democratic experiment in history, young American women faced a less coherent role than their European sisters assumed. They inherited an expectation of personal liberty which, Rothman's evidence and even Rothman suggests, they partially realized first in their fathers' homes, and then in the management of courtship, including its flexible sexual protocol. This expectation was abruptly checked, if not canceled, by their obligation, once married, to provide full-time security, or evidence of status, for their male partners on whom lay the actual task of ceaseless free enterprise in a capitalist polity.

Here is the contradiction Tocqueville spotted as the American woman's burden and challenge: to be the symbol, but not the continuous active agent, of the American dream. To exchange the role of American girl for the part of American wife was a rite of passage so difficult that the evidence of those wom-

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

Season of Spoils: The Story of the Reagan Administration's Attack on the Environment by Jonathan Lash, with Katherine Gillman and David Sheridan (Pantheon). A timely and persuasive account of a ruinous record. (Reviewed 10/1/84)

Margaret Mead: A Life by Jane Howard (Simon & Schuster). A detailed and discerning biography of America's most famous anthropologist. (10/1/84)

Labour in Power: 1945-1951 by Kenneth Morgan (Oxford University Press). A comprehensive account of the party's finest hours. (9/17&24/84)

The Haymarket Tragedy by Paul Avrich (Princeton University Press). A vivid and original study of a dramatic episode in American history. (9/17&24/84)

River by Ted Hughes (Harper & Row). The return of an important poet. (9/3/84)

The Letters of Jean Rhys edited by Francis Wyndham and Diana Melly (Viking). The novelist becomes one of her own greatest characters. (9/10/84)

The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy by Robert Jervis (Cornell University Press). A rigorous analysis of the latest thinking about the bomb. (9/3/84)

Paul Cézanne: The Watercolors, A Catalogue Raisonné by John Rewald (New York Graphic Society Books). A magisterial view of some of the most beautiful images in modern art. (9/10/84)

Edmund Gosse: A Literary Landscape by Ann Thwaite (Chicago University Press). The life of a man of letters in his glittering time. (9/10/84)

The Engineer of Human Souls by Josef Skvorecky (Knopf). An epic novel of a Czech émigré's life. (8/27/84)

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en more aware than the average of its intricacy—the testimony of the Harriet Beecher Stowes, the Fanny Ferns, the Grimké sisters, the "handful" Rothman erases—becomes essential to its full interpretation or even presentation. The creatures of social history who Rothman studies seem caught in dilemmas which they partially, admirably, even enviably, solve by the sheer pragmatics of living their lives. Common sense is certainly a historical force which social history does well to re-emphasize. However, the crises that Rothman's subjects surmount are passed on to less pragmatically minded feminine contemporaries and descendents in full force as inescapable problems.

ANN DOUGLAS

Ann Douglas is affiliated with the Center for American Cultural Studies at Columbia University, in New York.

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 4*

other way, the cost to the American economy in 1983 from steel imports over the 15 percent quota level included a $5.1 billion reduction in G.N.P., $1.1 billion in lost tax revenue, and $350 million in unemployment benefits. TRB asks: "If the Brazilians are stupid enough to sell steel here at a lower price than it cost them to produce it, why shouldn't we take advantage of their stupidity?" Because it will only encourage them to subsidize their industry with money provided them by improvident loans from multinational banks. Because it helps create overcapacity, which is the true problem in the world steel market. And because, though we may save a buck or two on cheaper steel now, no one will be talking about how crazy the Brazilians were when we need steel and foreigners are our only source of supply.

DAVID M. RODERICK
Chairman
U.S. Steel Corporation
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

TRB replies:
Quotas on imported steel would bring increased revenues and jobs to the American steel industry and increased tax revenues from people in that industry. That is what Mr. Roderick's study demonstrates, but it is something no one doubts. The C.B.O. study considers the important question, which is the effect of quotas on the entire economy. It concludes that while consumers would be out $7.7 billion a year in higher prices, the domestic steel industry would only be getting $4.5 billion in benefit. Over $2 billion would benefit foreign steelmakers (who also prefer higher prices) and over $1 billion would be wasted making steel that would be cheaper to import. Dueling studies is a bore. Here's an idea. Why not ban all imports? That way, we could all get rich by paying one another higher prices for everything, not just steel. Does Mr. Roderick think that would work? Yet that is his logic, applied only to his own industry. As for subsidies, who is subsidizing what is a complicated question, but whether the Brazilians need unfair subsidies to undersell Mr. Roderick is not: they don't. Mr. Roderick's final suggestion is that we dare not be at the mercy of foreign steelmakers. I would rather be dependent on world steel competition than on a protected American cartel led by Mr. Roderick's company.

BIR ZEIT'S DEFENSE

To the editors:
In his vitriolic article ("P.L.O. State," TNR, May 21) about Bir Zeit University, Micah Morrison asserts that "the Israelis are building a new campus" for the school. Yet the authorities have contributed in no way to the building of our new campus, a fact Mr. Morrison might have easily ascertained. Indeed, no Israeli aid has found its way to West Bank universities. The opposite is the case: heavy taxes and custom duties (with no exemptions), delays or denials of building permits and new programs, and restrictions on outside grants all hamper the development of the four West Bank universities. For example, since 1978, ANERA, an American private voluntary agency, has been trying to get approval from the Israeli authorities to donate $100,000 to Bir Zeit's faculty of Engineering, but to no avail.

ALBERT AGHARZIAN
Assistant to the Vice-President
Bir Zeit University
Ramallah

The editors reply:
We regret the error, which made its way into the article during the editing process.

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ASPEN DIARIST

Forever Young

WE SWOOPED IN LOW through amazing peaks and dropped down into a lush valley dotted with condos as far as the eye could see. I had a *café crème* and *pain au chocolat* at the airport snack bar, and watched the suntans and tennis rackets come and go. Eventually I sauntered over to an exceedingly hip clerk and asked when he thought my bags might be in. "No problem," he reassured me. "On the next plane from Denver. Or maybe the one after. They always come through eventually." No hurry. No problem.

DONNING MY COOL, I hopped into a Mellow Yellow taxi and headed for the village of Aspen, which nestles in a valley cupped between mountains as lushly green as Astroturf. Between the simulated redwood and cedar condos are sprinkled quaint Victorian houses in hues of apricot, fuchsia, and heather, San Francisco style. They and their quarter-acre plots sell for upward of $400,000 each. Only a commodity trader or a cocaine dealer could afford them. Happily Aspen has many such entrepreneurs. Most, however, prefer to live on the slopes of the mountain overlooking the town. There they build multiterraced dwellings with huge sheets of glass wrapped around jutting timbers. From marbled Jacuzzis they watch the last rays of the sun bathe Aspen Mountain in a golden Krugerrand glow and ponder the justice of a system that has brought them such rewards.

NOT EVERYONE in Aspen is rich, or even young, though a first-time visitor would be apt to think so. All the men seem to be 32 years old, with sandy moustaches, bulging pectorals, and perpetual tans. All the women are 29, with straight blonde hair, fashionably flat chests, and long legs. (For summer tourists subtract ten years.) Naturally none of these people was born here. All come from Cedar Rapids, Bayonne, or Dayton. Most of them work at one thing or another, though the jobs are usually below both their level of education and expectation. They are waitresses and tour guides and carpenters and clerks. They are here not to advance themselves—there is nowhere much to go, except in the real estate business—but simply to prolong the Aspen experience. You can see them jogging along the streets and bicycle trails, even up the mountain roads. They breathe easily, despite the thinness of the air at 8,000 feet. Their smooth complexions are rarely marred by a drop of sweat.

KEEPING IN SHAPE is a tyranny from which there is no respite. But for the golden young people of Aspen it is the affirmation of the good life. It is also the passport into it, for fatties are not permitted. And a good life it is: congenial folks, amusing restaurants, a constant inflow of new bodies, and hardly a rumble of the troubles that preoccupy the outside world. The very rich fly in and out on their Lear jets to check up on their property and test the slopes or the tennis courts. The locals house-sit for them and provide services that the rich require. This allows the youngish locals to stay on in their Shangri-La. Few of them can afford to live in Aspen itself. The tourists and second-home fatcats have driven property values up so high that those who actually do the work in Aspen have been mostly forced to live in cheaper locales down the road. They drive in every day as commuters to the town that was taken away from them.

THEY COME FOR the scenery, which is as spectacular as it's supposed to be; for the hassle-free existence, which they can have, within certain sharp limits; for the days that are interchangeable in their bucolic ordinariness, and the nights that offer hope of instant adventure or psychic transformation; for the anticipation of the first run down the slopes on last night's powder snow; for the experience of living on a *Zauberberg* just a little bit outside of time; for the possibility that tomorrow a beautiful (or rich) stranger will walk into their lives and all will be changed magically. The place lends itself to dreams. Not so long ago it was a scruffy mining town that time and venture capitalists had forgotten.

OTHERS HAD COME HERE once before in search of instant riches, built their palaces, spent their money, and then went off to hitch their broken dreams to other stars. Down the road a piece from Aspen, tucked away in the folds of a valley green in summer but totally snowbound in winter, lie the remnants of a little village called Ashworth. It was once as rich and sinful as Babel, or even Aspen. Chanteuses came to sing from Europe; gamblers and whores would snatch up your money in a glorious flash you'd remember for a lifetime. Now it's a few weathered boards, the wind whistling through the cracks, and a faint echo of coyotes. *Sic transit*. But that isn't the lesson of Aspen either. All dreams speed by too fast, all Xanadus become cracked boards and dust. When was it any different? So why not dance a little faster under the strobe light at the Paragon Café—the one in front of the video camera that captures your image and projects it on a screen above you, so that you can see yourself on MTV? To be the observer of oneself—what could be more tantalizing or forbiddingly satisfying? Who can even bother to notice one's partner at such an epiphanic moment? Come back tomorrow night for more.

DOES THE IMAGE ever fade? Does the time ever come when you say: I don't want to watch myself being watched? I don't care if I get fat? I get tired of being cool? I'm choking on fresh air, whole grain biscuits, and raw milk? I want to ride the subway? The answer is: I don't know. I didn't stay long enough. I walked through fields of asphodels so high up in the peaks called the Maroon Bells that I thought I could hear them ringing. A few hours later I lounged in a hot tub watching a double rainbow that appeared after a spectacular lightning storm that left half the sky purple-black and the other half baby-blue dotted with raspberry-lemon clouds. Why be upwardly mobile? I asked myself. Is there anything up there at the top of the ladder? Why not kiss the A Train and the Sheridan Road Express and the Harbor Freeway goodbye? Why not just take another hike into a wilderness of crater lakes and mountain meadows? Maybe I'd stayed on too long myself. Or not long enough. I ordered another Margarita and decided to think about it tomorrow.

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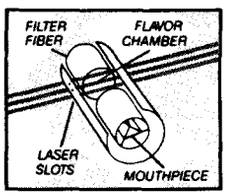

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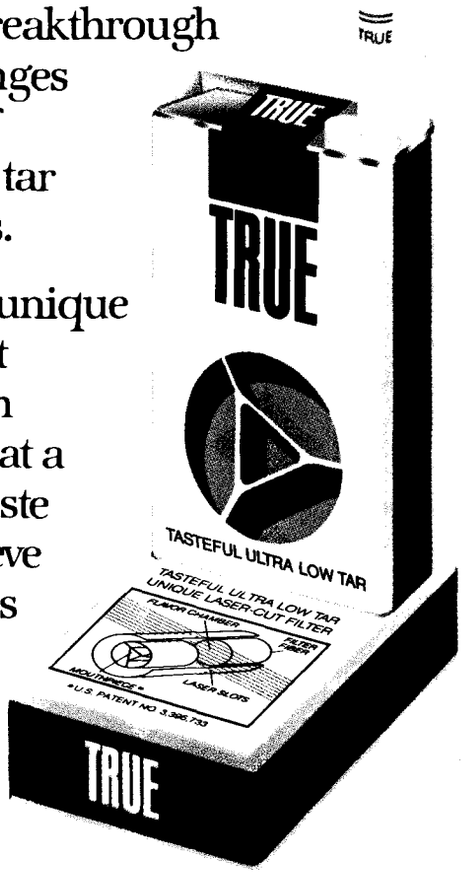

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